

LETTERS to EDWARD

Malcolm James McLeod



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Letters to Edward

By
Malcolm James McLeod, D.D.

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Letters to Edward

By
MALCOLM JAMES McLEOD

*Minister of Collegiate Church of St. Nicholas,
New York City*



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Foreword

THESE letters are not imaginary. It was never dreamed when originally written that they would ever appear in book form. And this has necessitated a few minor changes—changes in names and places and dates. Some sentences needed filing down a little and some polishing up. Of course much material had to be stricken out altogether as being too personal. Otherwise they are intact. They are substantially unchanged. They make no claim whatever to any literary merit; they are published for one reason solely, viz., that it was Edward's last request.



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A Call to California

New York City, March 4, 1912.

MY DEAR EDWARD :

I am so sorry to hear that the doctors have ordered you off. My, how I shall miss you! I do not see what I am going to do. Really life won't be the same.

How can I get on without those chats on the links? We ministers have heard so much at the Board rooms about ministers' blue Mondays, but Mondays of late years have been my bright days. It seemed when we were nearing that eighteenth hole, and the sun was in my eyes so that I could not tell whether or not I had topped as usual into that horrid bunker where I generally landed—it seemed to me as if I were already looking forward to next week, and our regular golfing tryst again. Indeed I felt as if it could not come fast enough. Only another Monday meant another Sunday, and my, how quickly they turn up! Does not the pace sometimes appal you? I sympathize with the old parson who said that the tightest place he was ever in was between two Sundays. Why, here it is

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Thursday already, and I haven't as yet even a text. My wife has often told me that she fears I am living for Mondays rather than Sundays, and that the driving tee is my pulpit. My, my, my, but how I shall miss you, dear boy!

But I am so delighted since you have to go to California that you received such a unanimous call. No, it was not my recommendation. It was your own good solid worth. I know the church well, have often preached in it, and they are a lovely people. Santa Flora is about fifty miles or so from Los Angeles and it is a charming place. I will tell you all about it later on. The congregation will welcome you with open arms. You see I know the whole lay of the land out there. I know the personnel of the church quite intimately. Many of them are among my warm friends. Much as I would like I cannot dissuade you from your decision. You know I wanted you to go even before the doctors gave their verdict. I know you are doing the wise thing. I know you are doing the right thing. I believe the outdoor life will bring you back all O.K. Only do not let the church work worry you. Your first duty is to

A Call to California

yourself. Give them canned fruit for quite a while. You see the fresh article is plentiful out there and the other kind will be a change. I would not think of writing a new sermon for at least a year. They need never know. And do just as little visiting as the law allows. I am sorry you have to pass muster as a fairly well man, but then it seems that has to be. I shall think of you every hour of the day in my study, and of course I shall be always thinking of you in the bunkers at Garden City and Apawamis. I will write you regularly about the work here. You see I am having my third anniversary next month. At your advice I came to this awful city just three years ago. Dear, dear, how the time flies! So I will tell you everything. And I want you to do the same. Tell me all about yourself, your cough, your appetite, your church, your choir, your horse-back riding, your flirtations, your reading—everything. We can still keep up some fine, long distance, continental chats. And believe me as ever yours most faithfully,

MILCOLUMBUS.

Letters to Edward

New York City, Monday, April 3, 1912.

MY DEAR EDWARD :

I've been longing for your letter and to know your first impressions. And here it is. I cannot tell you how delighted I am that you are pleased with everything. I knew they would give you a royal welcome, but I must confess I was not quite prepared for such warmth and heartiness. They seem to have outdone themselves. No, no, they are not doing it for my sake. I know them too well for that. They are just going to take you right into their hearts and love you from the start. But aren't these receptions awful things? I certainly do dread them; would much rather take a whipping any day. One hasn't nearly as much of that sort of thing here in the East. I think in all my experience in California there was not a week when we did not have a social gathering in the church of some kind or other. It was a pink tea or a tamale dinner or a cafeteria supper or something. I tried to go to most of them at first but at last had to give up

First Impressions

in sheer dyspeptic despair. And that annual reception to the pastor and his good wife was a real bugaboo. To stand up and shake hands with five hundred people in a row, and keep a steady smile on from 7:30 to 10:00 is enough to get one's face permanently distorted.

You spoke of Mrs. Winthrop. Well, go guardedly there. I have been told that she is dangerous. I will write you about some of these things later on. Isn't the building a beauty? How did you like the organ? And the vested choir? I do not wonder at your having felt like a fish in a millinery store when you got into the gown. The first time I put one on, I almost laughed out in the middle of the long prayer. Somehow a funny memory flashed. I thought of a dream I once had. But you will get used to it. And the prayer-meeting! Isn't it a real joy? Is there anything that cheers a minister's heart like a good prayer-meeting? If our people fully realized that, I think they would be more loyal to it. I have always been in the habit, in all the churches it has been my privilege to serve, of running the prayer-meeting on the three minute speaking limit, and in fact

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usually advise a minute less in prayer, that they can pray as long as they want to in private—the longer indeed the better—but that in public the shorter it is the more good it does ; that two minutes is long enough. Isn't it funny how some Christians in a prayer-meeting when they get up to talk have a strange idea that it is necessary for them to make an oration, or in prayer to wander over both hemispheres and remember every poor missionary from Sierra Leone to Kamchatka? You see Santa Flora, like every other place I have ever known anything about, has its few pious old fogies who need bottling up. They will kill any meeting. I really think that one of the most amusing stories I ever heard about a religious meeting is the story Grenfell tells when he first went to hear Moody in London. And one of these same old drones was addressing the Throne long and loud, when the big evangelist rose and said, "We will sing hymn No. — while the good brother finishes his prayer." Grenfell at the time was not a Christian ; in fact he was becoming so bored by the length of the petition that he was just about to reach for his hat and

First Impressions

leave when the interruption took place, and the ridiculousness of the thing so seized him that he stayed. And that wait became his life crisis. Do you know, Edward, I sometimes think we can come to God through the gift of humor. I heard Joseph Parker preach a sermon once on the twelve gates to the new Jerusalem. He mentioned the gates of intellect and sorrow and sacrifice and service and hope and love. I have forgotten the others, but I think humor ought to have been one of them.

But the best part of your letter is the good news that you are standing the "breaking in" so well. It nearly killed me here in New York. I hate these late dinners as I hate his Unholiness. Going out to a swell dinner at 8:30 is not in my line. I would a heap rather go to bed. I was at the Waldorf last night. We sat down at exactly 9:00 and rose at 11:15. There were twenty in the party and twelve courses and four kinds of wine. The dinner, I understand, was \$7.00 a plate, but I could not help noting how little was eaten—on my side of the board at least. The guests just nibbled. The food, I presume, was thrown away. Oh, the

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criminal waste of it, with little children all about us hungry! But more of that anon. I was really worrying quite a little over the receptions and attentions you will be receiving. But the encouraging news that the cough is better, and that you are eating well, and enjoying the horseback riding, and the outdoor sleeping, is certainly cheering. Keep it up. Stay out all you can. Sleep outside even if it pours. I used to wake up in the morning with my down quilt wet from the spray beating in on the railing of the loggia. Do not take one grain of medicine. Paying doctors for your trouble is just burning your money. They cannot do you one bit of good. Live in the open. Get the smell of the soil into your lungs. Eat all you can of good simple food and give doctor and druggist the go by. In my next I will tell you a little about myself. So meanwhile believe me ever most faithfully yours,

MILCOLUMBUS.

Some New York Experiences

Tuesday, April 25, 1912.

MY DEAR EDWARD :

I did not get your letter last week and so I am a wee bit disappointed. I have been pegging away all the morning on a sermon on the little word "not." My text is "Inasmuch as ye did it not," but I'm abbreviating it beyond recognition, you see, because I rather like little unpretentious enterings. People do not expect so much. You know I have been wonderfully impressed of late with how much there is in the Bible about the things we don't do.

Do you know that one of the most striking things to me about the Judgment Day is that this is going to be the surprise. It is not the criminals and thieves and murderers who are going to be on the left hand, but those who did nothing. I think we ministers are a little lax in telling our people that respectable sin is the great sin. When the Master wanted a sample of real iniquity in its scarlet distinctness, He did not go to the saloon or the slum or the tenderloin. He went to the house of the Pharisee.

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And I cannot help feeling that the whole intent of the parable of the rich man and Lazarus is to present in vivid language the sin of a useless life. Or one might cite the fig tree illustration, or the story of the talents, or of Gallo, or of Meroz, or of Laodicea, or the attitude of the priest and Levite in the Good Samaritan episode, or indeed any one of half a hundred other passages. I have just been reading Amiel. What a strange genius he was ! The letters are just as brilliant as they can be, but I get so impatient with him. He seems to have known every day just exactly what he ought to have done and yet he never did it. It seems to me the condemnation he must have heard when he woke up over yonder was "Inasmuch as you did it not." And as for Goethe ! Well, I know how you almost idolize him, but as for myself I can never excuse his selfishness. To think that a man of his brilliant equipment and influence could witness the rise and fall of Napoleon, the French Revolution with its rivers of blood, could hear the war songs of Korner, could watch the cruelties, the injustices, the tyrannies and the wrongs all about him, and

The Sin of Indifference

yet remain aloof to the last, a cold, silent, unmoved spectator—well, I simply cannot understand it. There is not a line in anything that Goethe ever wrote to indicate that he cared a straw what became of France or Germany or Spain or England or Napoleon or the French Revolution or anything but Goethe. I know it is a fearful sin to abuse one's gifts, but I think it is almost worse to lock them away. Because sins of commission are not infrequently the results of drink and passion and sudden attack and heredity and good red rich hot blood, but pride and selfishness and jealousy and envy, and lack of sympathy, and coldness and unconcern, and apartness from the poor, and hypocrisy are calm, studied, deliberate things, and so, I take it, more reprehensible.

But I did not really mean when I began this letter to give you a brief of next Sunday's sermon. I am getting along fairly well. We had twenty-seven accessions two weeks ago and that is encouraging. It made me feel real hopeful. The church, I really think, is getting into shape. You know it was quite run down. My honored and sainted predecessor was a sick man

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the last nine months of his life, so it has been practically leaderless for about two years, and meanwhile lots of our people have drifted around to other places. You see there is no church loyalty here in New York—absolutely none. The church is the man. One hears of Dr. Jowett's church and Dr. Jefferson's church and Dr. Parkhurst's church and Dr. Burrell's church and Dr. Eaton's church. Never of the Fifth Avenue Baptist or the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian or the Broadway Tabernacle. Denominational fences mean nothing at all, for which of course, as you well know, your humble servant is not shedding many tears. Denominationalism, I take it, is doomed. I am convinced that my friend Boynton was right when he said that in seventy-five years there will be only two denominations in our country, Catholic and Protestant. But the churches are so fearfully cold. I really think that formality and dignity are the mountains we have to move here. They are our greatest hindrances to real effective work. Why, hardly any of my congregation know each other, and yet they are the kindest, loveliest people in the world. One

Recognition of Friends on Earth

of the pewholders in Doctor B——'s church was telling me last week of a brother and sister who sit directly in front of them. They did not know their names, but thought of course they were man and wife. They had never even bowed to each other, although they had been occupying these same seats for four years, and all had been quite regular attendants. Now what do you think of that for cordiality? Think of sitting for four consecutive years every Sunday right behind people, and so close to them that you could almost tell what brand of soap they washed with that morning, and never even bowing, and if that is not enough to make one stop preaching on the recognition of friends in heaven—well, I'll give it up. Indeed I might instance my own case. I have been living for the past three years in an apartment. There are thirty-six families in the house, and in all this time I have never spoken to a single member. In New York here we get so dreadfully afraid of each other. We are almost afraid to be human. We are almost afraid to be decent.

One of the things that mortifies me most my-

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self is the inexcusable habit of coming late to church. Sometimes when I step out on the pulpit on Sunday morning I really think there are not fifty people in the building, although it seats twelve hundred. By the time the first anthem is finished there are perhaps two hundred present. Then at 11 : 20 maybe five hundred. And at 11 : 30 the church is fairly well filled. You can see how our preliminary exercises are well-nigh fruitless, as far as the culture of any devotional spirit is concerned. In fact it sometimes so disturbs me that I am far from a proper frame of mind to get up and preach when the time for that ordeal arrives. I was asking Brown the other day if he had any trouble of this kind in his church. "Lots of it," he said. "One man with his wife and son and three daughters walks up almost the whole length of the middle aisle every Sunday morning regularly at about 11 : 25." Then I inquired why he supposed they did it. His reply was, "*Oh, the lust of the looking-glass, I guess.*" But I do not think he is right. I think it is nothing but habit. But then, this is New York. I have tried my best to break it,

The Late-Comers

but to no use, it seems. All the churches too are alike. And the theatres also! Nothing starts on time. I went to a Mendelssohn rehearsal a week ago. The concert was scheduled to begin at 8:15. The singers marched out on the platform at exactly five minutes of nine, and it was midnight when we got home. But I tell my organist we are going to start at 11:00 promptly, if there is no one present but himself and myself and the sexton, who is also an undertaker, by the way. (You see all our sextons are undertakers.) So we will have the minister and the undertaker anyway even if the dead haven't arrived. Which, by the way, reminds me of the explanation the little fellow gave to Paul's remark in Timothy. "The quick," he said, "are those as hustles and gets across the avenue and the dead are those as doesn't."

And that again reminds me of a yarn I heard quite recently about a dear old minister I knew well in my college days, and who six months or so ago went to his well-earned rest. His wife, now more than fourscore, and who had walked with her husband for almost half a century, some

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years ago lost her memory. It was at her husband's funeral service that it happened. The room was filled with mourners, and the service was just about to begin when the dear old lady turned to her daughter and said, "Isn't it time for papa to be coming?" And that is a little bit how I feel on Sunday mornings. Isn't it time for the procession to be coming? But I must not get sacrilegious. I will look anxiously for your letter to-morrow. So till then believe me

Ever faithfully yours,

MILCOLUMBUS.

The Climate of California

Monday, May 8, 1912.

MY DEAR EDWARD :

I was so pleased to get your letter that I could hardly wait to open it. It was handed to me by the janitor just as I was going on to the platform at prayer-meeting, and during the singing of one of the hymns I broke the seal on the sly, and assured myself that it had no bad news. For I was getting anxious. It is now almost three weeks since I heard from you, and so of course I could not help but fear that perhaps you had contracted another of those wretched colds and were laid up. I have so often warned you against being reckless that I know you will think me unnecessarily insistent, but an Easterner cannot realize how easy it is to take cold in California. The first year I was out there I had a cold all the time, simply because that afternoon chill, just as the sun goes down, is so deceptive. Then there is such a contrast between day and night. And even in the hottest day of summer if one can get under the baldest apology for a shade tree

Letters to Edward

he is comparatively cool. Often in waiting for a trolley car have I sought out and cuddled myself behind a telephone pole when the thermometer was easily ninety-five. You would be surprised how Arctic-like it was. It takes fully a year in Southern California to learn how to live. So again I say "be careful."

But I did not mean to preach to you this time, only I did not get a chance yesterday and so I suppose it is sort of automatic. We fellows, like these periodical drinkers, have to break loose at certain regular stages. The gallery in our church was pronounced unsafe on Saturday, and as the workmen could not get it fixed in time the place had to be closed. For which I was not so very deeply grieved. It is not at all unwelcome to get a week's rest after the winter's work. And the opportunity to go around and see how other sky-pilots conduct themselves is one I like to take advantage of on every possible occasion. Isn't it a real treat to sit in a pew once in a while? These preachers who are always calling you up to the pulpit provoke me a little. I went to church last summer up in the Adirondacks to hear an old

The Big Hat in Church

classmate of mine whom I had never heard preach. I went in a little late purposely, and sat me down on the very back seat behind one of these big hats that are threatening to empty our churches. And it was certainly a mammoth piece of millinery. Really, I cannot blame people for kicking as they do. I think some of them are positively vulgar. But this morning it was right handy as a hiding-place, and I was kept busy keeping swing with the frills and the feathers as they oscillated to and fro, for fear that pulpit eye would spot me. But I guess he had been on the lookout for me, as he knew I was in the neighborhood somewhere, summering, for I had not been more than two minutes in my seat when I heard a voice, "I see Dr. —— in the congregation. Would he kindly come forward and lead in prayer after the singing of hymn No. ——?" I felt like saying something naughty. But up the aisle I had to march in gray sack suit and red necktie and turn-down collar, and of course choke down my wicked feelings and lead in prayer.

But I was going to tell you what I did yes-

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terday. Well, I had quite a full day. I certainly got my money's worth. In the morning I went round to hear Fullerton. He is a grand old man. Just as brilliant and keen and incisive as ever. His text was the parable of the Sower. And he began by telling why this parable heads the list, why the great Teacher did not begin with something else. He might have taken this, might have taken that, might have taken some other illustration. And so by his own unique process of elimination he advanced to his own ground with resistless and tremendous effect. His is certainly a very brilliant mind. I have never heard a preacher just like him, and indeed I cannot recall a single divine in the whole history of the Church who I would imagine was anything of his type; he is decidedly unique. He has made his own style and I cannot even imagine a successful imitator. I liked him immensely but the brilliancy and sparkle are the chief charm. The listener is always looking for it, always expecting it, and rarely is he disappointed. Of course he is a speaker who requires very close attention. Every paragraph is packed with thought.

Some New York Preachers

This is no place for listlessness. If I were to be allowed to make a criticism it would be that the discourse is too severely intellectual. Perhaps some might think that the spiritual is not sufficiently pronounced. One almost feels like a pigmy criticizing a giant, and yet we all have our likes and dislikes, and I confess the way I feel about it myself is this, that the spirituality of a sermon should be its most prominent mark. The more spiritual a sermon is the more it seems to me to fulfill its function, just as the more Scriptural and simple and earnest a prayer is the more surely and directly it reaches my heart. But he is a wonderful man, one of the grand men of the American pulpit.

In the afternoon I wended my way over to Brooklyn to hear Dowling. He was at the Y. M. C. A. He has a big following in Brooklyn, as you know. It was the first time I ever heard him preach although I have read quite a number of his sermons in the *Eagle*. But frankly I never could get as much out of them as some do, and so was anxious for the opportunity to study him at close quarters from the pew. His style is philosophical ; it is not quite

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clear and crystal enough for me. It is the old Robert South style—long involved sentences, rounded periods, eloquent climaxes. But his people love him and he is doing a great work for the kingdom.

In the evening I went up to Columbia to hear Holland. I saw by the papers that he happened to be preaching there. Holland is a great man. I think he is the greatest preacher on Manhattan Island. He is just as brilliant as an opal and with a wonderful play of colors. I like Holland for one thing because he has no tricks, no gallery gymnastics, never advertises, and yet he is full of surprises. You never can tell just what is coming next. He is, as you know, the apostle of the quiet manner. I sometimes wonder if he does not carry it a little too far. He is a bit over-quiet for me. I think if he would cultivate one or two bursts of fervor in his sermons—I think he would add to his effectiveness fully fifty per cent. I always feel when I hear Holland that his discourse lacks something, and I never can tell just what it is unless it be the clinching appeal. He seems to come to the very verge of greatness and miss

Some New York Preachers

it. But I do enjoy him immensely. He is a great man, a greater man in my humble judgment than his predecessor Dr. Edwards, and you remember what a giant he was. As an expositor he reminds me of old Dr. Taylor—Dr. William M. Taylor, I mean. How I wish I could succeed as an expository preacher!

By the way, do you recall that time we came over from Princeton in the Christmas holidays, and went to hear Dr. Taylor in the old Broadway Tabernacle one Sunday evening? You remember how we got our note-books out? We were as busy reporting the sermon as if we had been in Rabbi Green's class room taking down his lecture on the "Hebrew Feasts." We thought it was Dr. Taylor we were listening to all the time, till we overheard a good Scotch lady say as we were going out, "I wish that big shock of hair had stayed in his own pulpit the night." It seems it was Dr. Ormiston we had been reporting, and when we got out on the sidewalk we tore up the leaves we had written, and consigned them ungraciously to the curb. The New Tabernacle is at Fifty-Sixth Street. It is all surrounded by automobile shops. I was

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walking up Broadway the other day with my little boy. We were on the other side of the street. He looked across and saw the sign-board "Broadway Tabernacle Church Congregational." "Papa," he said, "what's the meaning of that sign, 'Broadway Automobile Church Congregational' ? Is it a church for automobilists ?" But I must stop. Write whenever you can. And believe me,

Faithfully yours,

MILCOLUMBUS.

P. S. Did I tell you that I was going to Chicago for Sunday week ? I got an invitation some weeks ago to speak at the University and very foolishly accepted. Then on Sunday evening I am going to be with the Sunday Evening Club at Orchestra Hall. They tell me it is quite a remarkable gathering. I will tell you about it later.

A Trip to Chicago

Friday, May 19, 1912.

MY DEAR EDWARD :

Well, here I am en route to the big windy city. I have had a most entertaining trip thus far and I want to tell you all about it. I got on my sleeper at New York late this afternoon, and when we got through the tunnel I found myself seated just behind two young people who had been attending the Christian Endeavor Convention at Atlantic City. One says "Gwen" and the other "Walt," so I presume Gwendolin and Walter are intended.

Gwendolin is a pretty little rosy-cheeked blonde of seven or eight and twenty, with a high intellectual brow, a clean cut Grecian face and eyes that strike sparks of kindliness and humor. Walter is perhaps a trifle younger. I think he is a minister, but of that I am not sure. They are rattling good talkers, and as I have my note-book with me, and my early shorthand training, I am making good use of both. I overhear every word and the dialogue certainly is interesting me. They seem not to be aware

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how loudly they are talking, but then my ears are very acute and besides I seem to be like some deaf people who hear best in a noise. Every now and then one turns around to see if possibly they are being overheard, but as I am busy scribbling I guess they conclude I am some poor tired travelling man writing his daily love-note to his wife. I did not notice them so much at first nor what they were saying. It was not till they started in along my own line that my ears woke up and took notice. Of course when they quoted my own name it became quite exciting. John B. Gough used to say that he would pay any money for a ticket to hear a man who could mimic him perfectly. And I guess the next best thing is to hear one-self discussed when the conversers are unconscious of your presence.

“And how did you like the Convention, Gwen?” was the question that really opened my ears and led me to incline.

“Oh, I cannot tell you how much I enjoyed it, Walt,” Gwen made answer. “I have gained inspiration and outlook and consecration I hope, and—well, something or other—ideals shall I

A Theological Discussion On the Way

say, and lots of fresh new plans for our little church at home."

"Indeed," said Walter, "and are you not afraid to put them into practice? There are a lot of old fogies in our church and if I were to say anything about new plans, well, I guess they would say to me what they said to Carey, 'Sit down, young man; keep quiet.'

"Your grandmother, you say, has just been celebrating her golden wedding. We can go a century better. Our old church has just been celebrating its one hundred and fiftieth landmark. We have been doing things pretty much the same way ever since, I guess—same psalms, same paraphrases, same sermons I was going to say, same building even—what do you think of that? We are living in the Old Testament, you see. 'Nothing new under the sun.' Our motto is 'Semper idem,' always the same."

"Indeed I'm not," Gwendolin remarked; "why should I be afraid? I think the Church is at least half a century behind the times. She is too dreadfully conservative. She has such a shivering dread of anything new. She reminds me of a little fellow walking on thin ice. I

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cannot for the life of me see why we should do things the very same way our great grandfathers did them. I love to sit down and have grandmother tell me of the ‘good old long ago,’ as she calls it, when the snowbanks were fifty feet deep, and the water in the kettle had frozen during the night, and they had to light the morning fire with a flint. That was when they ground corn by putting two flat stones together, throwing a handful of corn between them and taking four hours to grind enough for dinner. It was right enterprising then no doubt. But to-day when the great Pillsbury Mills roll out a hundred barrels an hour I don’t know how enterprising it would be. Some dear good people want to do religious work as they did it in Antioch and Jerusalem and Laodicea and Rome. Who would carry on war as the Romans did? How would Xerxes’ navy do against a squadron of American iron-clads?” And she broke out into a hearty laugh as if surprised at her own eloquence.

“There is one custom,” she went on, “that I found in some of the Brooklyn churches that seems to me a most excellent one. The first

The Church and the Children

ten minutes or so of the morning service is devoted to the children. Yes exactly, a 'league of worshipping children.' They sing an appropriate hymn and the pastor gives them a little spicy talk of about five minutes; then they retire. The children all love it. They look forward to it. They want to be there early and get a seat. Why, when I was a girl, and that was not the day before yesterday," she added with a coy underglance, "all the Church was to me was a sermon, a sigh, and, I'm not ashamed to say it, a snooze. I never heard of such a thing as a sermon to the children. Dear help you, we children were nonentities. I was as much afraid of the Dominie, as we called him, as I was of McEwen's big yellow dog. If I saw him coming I would run around the corner to avoid collision. There was no kindly smile upon his face, no hearty hand-clasp in his great parsonic bosom. He was one of those fearful men. Every time I met him he would ask me, 'What is the misery of that estate whereinto man fell?' Of course I did not know. I never could remember that old catechism anyway, and it wasn't very comfortable.

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He was one of those old Puritan models we read about, face fixed in plaster, a walking weeping willow. His very look was sepulchral. We used to go and sit in the same pew always, and listen to the same man always, who often, it seemed, preached the same sermon in pretty nearly the same way. As some one said, you knew exactly what you were going to get, and if you did not get it—which by the way did not happen very often—you were disappointed. I am not blaming the dear old soul. It takes a genius to be fresh and interesting always. And we make a man who is not a genius try to do his work. And when he fails, as fail he will and must, we say, ‘how dull, how dull, how very dull!’

“Now, Walt, to be perfectly frank with you, I think the Church in our large cities is going back. I do not really believe she is holding her own. The clergy of course will deny it, but facts are facts, and the clergy are poor judges anyway. They are too near at hand. They cannot see the battle for the smoke, like the fellow who could not see the forest for the trees. Some of us standing aloof are having a

Abandoned City Churches

clearer view than the clergy. It requires distance to see the mountain.

“Let me tell you something. Would you believe that I counted twenty-nine abandoned churches in New York City below Fourteenth Street? Well, I did, and I did not see more than half of them either. There are five hundred thousand souls in that churchless territory. Just think of it! The Church is running away from the people. It is a race for life. Now did you ever hear a worse caricature of Christianity than that? I see by the latest statistics that in 1890 there was one church-member in New York to every ten of the city’s population, while last year there was one in twelve. That means a decline of about one per cent. a year.

“Since leaving home I made a point to visit some of the larger churches on different Sunday evenings and not one of these had more than one hundred people present, and in one particularly I counted exactly seventeen—including the preacher, sexton and your humble servant. Now what do you think of that? I can feel the chill of the place yet. It was like

Letters to Edward

one of our cold December drizzles at home. And that is not the worst either. For every church that was open I found at least two that were closed. Think of that. I know it is vacation time and hot weather and all that, but I think it is wrong; I think it is wicked. Walt, the Protestant Church in our large cities is losing ground.

“Now what is the trouble? The trouble, I firmly believe, is that she is behind the times. She is not progressive. She is not attractive. She is a slave to tradition. She is meeting living men with dead words. She has crushed all her magnificence into an iron creed. She’s antiquated in her machinery, her methods and a good many of her men. Now there’s Dr. ———. A friend told me to be sure to go to hear him, that he was such an orator, and so of course I went. But dear me, he’d put me to sleep with his oratory. His sermon no doubt was fine, but my own conviction is that the finer your sermon, the fewer you will have to hear it. Walt, the pulpit, as a rule, is not practical. There ought to be a chair in all our seminaries, I firmly believe, to teach men tact.

The Question of Amusements

Half our young theologues are perfect clowns. What's the use of preaching, as I heard a man do last summer, about the deceitfulness of riches to a lot of poor fellows with twenty dollars a month or so, and sometimes almost as many children?

“Why, when I was a girl, in that little old country church we used to attend, I was told that cards were of the household of Satan. The dance, the theatre, the billiard table belonged to the same Herodian family. Now I do not play cards because I think it is such a waste of time, and I do not go to the theatre as a rule, although I think the drama has a great mission and great possibilities for good, and I never dance, but what in the name of all that is beautiful is there wrong about a bowling alley or a billiard cue? Why can't we learn from His Satanic Majesty? He has certainly been a most successful sportsman. He knows how to fish. He has been landing fish as fast as he could pull them in. The Church doesn't seem to have the remotest idea of the science of baiting. Once in a while she baits with a protracted meeting. She hands

Letters to Edward

the rod to a Chapman or a Dawson or a Gipsy Smith or a Billy Sunday. But the fish are not overly fond of this food. The best, the largest, the fattest trout won't come near it. You only catch the little nervous fellows."

Well, my dear boy, I must bring this long eavesdropping report to a close. But I knew you would like to read it. The waiter has just passed through with his "first call for dinner in the dining car." And my friends have left me. But I am going to follow them up. I will keep scribbling away when they return—for they are certainly an interesting couple. Meanwhile believe me ever most faithfully,

MILCOLUMBUS.

Notes For a Sermon

Saturday, May 20, 1912.

MY DEAR EDWARD :

Well, here I am at the Auditorium. We arrived safely about noon. I saw but little of my two friends this morning, for they spent most of the time in the observation car, but last evening after dinner they came back to their seats and had it hot and heavy again, and I was just as interested as ever. I promised you that I would pass the discussion on, but if it bores you, just don't bother reading it. As for myself, I think I will work it up into a sermon somehow. As you will see before going far, she is no clown, and he, as I partly suspected at first, and now feel almost sure, is a young theologian. I had a good view of them both when entering. Walter is tall, fully six feet, with a large open blue eye, a smooth shaven face and a wealth of coal-black hair. The general tone of form and feature indicates refinement, with a peculiar intensity of utterance that makes him quite impressive. His head is large, and noticeably broad and full in the temporal regions. His voice is deep

Letters to Edward

and soft. He spoke with a clean-cut phrase and pointedness. He has the polish and carriage of a college man.

"True," said Gwendolin, "and don't you think the reason is that the Church to-day is drifting into Unitarianism? I mean, don't you think that religion is getting more humanitarian and less divinitarian—if I may coin a word?"

"That depends," said Walter, "on what you mean by unitarian. Unitarianism is one of those flexible, elusive words! If you mean that the Church is getting more practical and less theoretical and doctrinal, more concerned about men's bodies than she used to be, then I would say yes, certainly, without a doubt."

"No, I mean doctrinal, too," said Gwendolin. "Take, for instance, the Bible. Hardly any one to-day believes in the Bible in the same way as we used to. Why, when I was a girl, every word, every syllable, every letter, every stroke and tittle and dot and jot were believed to have been written by the Divine finger. What is it you call it? Plenary inspiration, verbal dictation, amanuensism—isn't that it?"

"Anyhow, the good book was in some way

Some Old Ideas About the Bible

machined. The most of us did not have the faintest idea how it came together. I guess we thought it was handed down in its integrity from heaven. Perhaps some of us concluded in our simple hearts that God must have given it to Moses or Noah or some of those old Patres 'way back on the sky-line of history. Of course that made us reverence it. Why, if you had hinted such a thing to papa's mother as errors in the Bible, she would have taken a fit. Like as not she would have made us memorize the Pentateuch for punishment.

"I remember one Christmas day ; remember it distinctly. Aunt Margaret and little Catherine were spending the day with us. Well, at dinner we didn't have a chair high enough for Catherine, and so I took out the big family Bible and a bundle of music sheets, and put them under her. My, my, but you should have seen grandmother. I think I shall never forget the look she gave me. It darkened my whole Christmas delight. We had to have family worship immediately after dinner and a long chapter had to be read—from Lamentations I guess—to make atonement."

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“Yes, but are you sure,” interrupted Walter, “that our modern spirit of irreverence is an improvement? Maybe you do not call it irreverence, but I’m just kind of old-fashioned enough to call it that. The trouble with the world to-day, Gwen, I cannot help feeling, is largely lack of reverence. No ground is sacred, no house is sacred, no day even is sacred. There is no most holy place in life any longer; there is not even a holy place. Our generation has become one of iconoclasts and monument breakers. Nothing is too sacred for man’s vulgar touch; nothing, absolutely nothing,” he emphasized, with a touch of impatience.

“The house where Burns was born is the Mecca of all Scotchmen. The manuscripts of Angelo have been sealed in a glass case. The Transfiguration of Raphael is ribbed by iron bars. The Sistine Chapel is guarded with soldiers. When Doctor Schliemann unearthed the lost works of Aristotle, such veneration did scholars cherish for the old worn-out parchment that they photographed the pages, and then sealed it in decorated stone.

“But to-day nothing is revered, nothing,

The Irreverence of the Age

nothing. Niebuhr tells us Romulus did not found Rome. Wolff affirms Homer did not write the Iliad. Greene affirms he did not write the Odyssey. Briggs says Moses did not write the Pentateuch. Some other fellow insists Shakespeare did not write Hamlet. The author of 'Supernatural Religion,' says John, did not write his gospel. We used to think that all the Psalms were written by David. Now Canon Cheyne and these German omniscients are telling us that not one of them was written by David, and that not a single one of them has any direct reference to a personal Messiah.

"And so our Bible critics pore over dusty tomes, and search for faults and flaws. There is no veneration for anything, Gwen. Even children have no respect for their parents; servants none for their masters. The chief end of man used to be to 'glorify God and enjoy Him forever.' Now, as Canon Farrar said, 'the chief end of man is to speculate and theorize and enjoy it forever'—aye, and a right good speculator he was himself. The Pyramids, I am told, are being covered up with soap advertisements, and the ancient temples of

Letters to Edward

Egypt are being torn down to build hovels. When those old Goths poured down upon Rome, their mission was destruction. They entered the Forum and began hurling javelins at the paintings. They struck away the pedestal of every god and hero. They hewed to pieces the portals of the Pantheon. Then they burned down temple and school and college. That is exactly what the critics are doing with the Bible. Oh, it makes me tired."

"Oh, Walt, I don't look at it in that way. I think you are unfair. Many of our higher critics are quite as reverent as the most orthodox scholars. I have sat under several of them myself, and I know it is true. For myself, I think the higher criticism is restoring the Bible. We must distinguish between the faith and the accretions to the faith. It seems to me pure waste of time to contend that these accretions have not been considerable, that a jewel could lie for two thousand years in the open and not gather some rust. For instance, a portrait of Dante has recently been brought to light. For a long time it was hidden away and lost. The world knew that there was such a portrait

The Higher Criticism

somewhere, but no one knew where. At last it was discovered on a certain wall. Dust and soot and stain had defaced it ; some one too had whitewashed over it, and the picture was lost. Then it was discovered, and little by little, scale by scale, the whitewash and soot were removed, and Dante was brought to light.

“Some years ago one of the noblest cathedrals in England was slightly spoken of. Its transept columns were found to be nothing but plaster, but one day some kind friend chipped through paint and plaster, when lo, there appeared the most beautiful workmanship of exquisite marble. Nobody claimed, so far as I know, that it would be desecration to destroy the plaster, and so very soon it had vanished. That, it seems to me, is what criticism is doing with the Bible. Destruction, you say? No, no, restoration. It is bringing back the temple to its original glory. A heap of dust and rubbish has accumulated. Let us sweep it away. No divinity in dust. Let it go.

“No scholarly Christian to-day, Walt, holds to the equal authority and validity of all parts of Scripture. You surely must admit that.

Letters to Edward

Who wrote the Pentateuch? Nobody knows. We are almost certain Moses did not write it. Who wrote the books of Kings and Chronicles? Nobody knows. Who wrote the book of Esther? The most conservative Princeton man does not pretend to know. In our finals at the University one of Dr. Moulton's questions was to tell what we knew about the authorship of Job. Well, Dr. Moulton himself says that it does not matter a particle who wrote the peerless epic. Who wrote the book of Ecclesiastes or the Song of Songs or the Proverbs? Why, there is not a single book in the whole Old Testament of whose authorship we can speak with confidence. Moreover, all scholars admit to-day that there are errors in the Bible. It is full of errors,—chronological errors, literary errors. The Science of the Bible is the science of the most unscientific people that ever lived. To the Hebrew nation real science was unknown.

“We know the story of Creation is not literally true. It is not true in time or order. We know there never was a world deluge. The story of the origin of language is simply

The Bible Not Infallible

childish. We know that the Old Testament miracles are absurd—many of them—and we are all agreed that its morality, a great deal of it, is shocking. To this day the Mormons defend polygamy out of the Old Testament. I know there is a primeval charm about it, and all that, but that is not the point.

“Now, the way I look at it is this. The Bible is progressive. It is not infallible. Nothing progressive could possibly be infallible. Why, there is not a single verse in the whole Old Testament where it claims to be infallible. Infallibility has been foisted on it by tradition. The Bible, as I take it, is an evolution like the locomotive or the printing-press. The Divine spirit never creates a perfect instrument, but sets it going in a crude form with possibilities. A perfect man, a perfect Christian, a perfect instrument would be a discord in the economy of earth, for earth means growth, development, improvement.

“Some people are afraid the Bible will go out of fashion. They are always defending it, propping it, apologizing for it. Did not Calvin protest against the Copernican system of astron-

Letters to Edward

omy, because it was irreconcilable with Scripture, and did not John Owen reject Newton's discovery of gravitation for the same reason? The history of exegesis is the history of acknowledged blunders. Absurd! The Bible is the classic of the human soul. Truth needs no defense, except defense sometimes from its defenders. Do I love my home where I hope to nestle snugly to-morrow night? Why do I love it? Do I love it the less because it is a piece of human workmanship? Is it the bricks and stones and mortar that make it so dear to me? Or is it rather the dear ones who live in it?

“Some one calls the Bible the Westminster Abbey of life. I have been thinking of that. Westminster Abbey is not the work of one generation, but rather of twenty or thirty generations. Edward the Confessor started it in the eleventh century on the Norman plan. His work was carried on by Richard the Second and Henry the Fifth. The western end was not completed till Henry the Seventh's time, and the western towers were not finished, if I recollect rightly, till the reign of George the

The Bible a Cathedral

Third. Outwardly the Abbey represents many orders—Norman, Gothic, Early English—so that we have written out in stone the history of the great periods of architecture. But the grand old Abbey is not many, but one. It is a unit.

“So with the Bible. It is like all great cathedrals, of composite character and historic growth. It is a lofty pile of literature. It is not the unity of a house, but of an Abbey. Law, litany, psalm, song, sermon, prophecy, poetry, history, all in one. There it stands. It needs no recommendation, does it? What though you can point to a stone here and there that is defaced? Is that such a detraction? What if the workmanship in parts is defective? Is that such an enigma? What if a chapel or cloister, supposed to be one of the earliest parts, is discovered to be the contribution of a later hand? Does that invalidate the whole? Look at it in its entirety. There the noble monument stands. It tells its own tale, doesn't it? It has survived fire and flood, resisted storm and siege. The only deliverance the Bible needs, I say, Walt, is deliverance from

Letters to Edward

its defenders. It has more to fear, I firmly believe, from the tyranny of tradition than from the criticism of scholarship—I mean reverent scholarship.”

“Oh, pshaw,” interrupted Walter. “Reverent scholarship! That’s just it. If these critics would only agree on something themselves, and then come up in solid line, I would not mind so much, but the trouble is they don’t. They do not agree on anything. One tells you this, another tells you that, and a third tells you something else. If I cannot accept the word of the Bible in science, if its geology is absurd, how on earth can I trust to its testimony on graver matters? If what it tells me about this world is not reliable, how can I accept what it tells me about the other world? Come now, Gwen, would you yourself believe a man’s word concerning things with which you were not acquainted, if he deliberately falsified concerning things with which you were acquainted? Tradition means handed down. Is a thing to be condemned simply because it has been handed down? What is there that has not been handed down? Is a thing false because

Tradition

it has the seal of age? We used to think that was a strength rather than a weakness. It takes age to make a diamond. You can make charcoal in an hour or so, but the diamond calls for cycles, and yet the chemist tells us they are the same.

“Why, you cannot understand a single picture gallery in Europe without a knowledge of the Old Testament. You cannot enjoy any of the great oratorios without being well versed in it. You cannot read English literature intelligently without knowing your prophet and poet and apostle. Oh, it’s mighty easy to destroy!

“Ring in the new. Yes, ring it in by all means, but let us be sure first that it is true. I rejoice in every honest research into the text of Scripture. All honor to the noble men who with scholarly sight and insight are sweeping away the dust, and removing the debris, and bringing to light the Rock of Ages. The volumes of nature and Revelation must correspond. God cannot lie. His hand wrote both.

“Only one thing that annoys me and antagonizes me is that these critics get so reckless and arrogant and irreverent. They know so ir-

Letters to Edward

ritatingly much. They are so cock-sure of everything. They tell us that the good Book has been so clumsily patched together that all they have to do is simply sit in their studies and mark where this redactor began and where that fellow ended ; where this Catholic monk interpolated a passage, and that other Aramaic scribe omitted one, and so on and so on.

“ Maxwell says that the six later books of Virgil were written by a second Virgil who lived one hundred and fifty years later. And why ? Because the earlier cantos are romantic, and the later ones so tragic. Greene says that Homer did not write the Odyssey because of its quiet pastoral air, so different from the bugle ring of the Iliad. Why, shortly after Napoleon’s death, a critical inquiry was published, trying to prove that no such person as Napoleon ever lived.

“ Now, my humble way of looking at it, Gwen, is that if you drown Adam and Noah and Joshua and Jonah in a deluge of German denial ; if you kill off Moses as an author, and David as a singer ; if you cut Isaiah into half a dozen pieces ; if you say there are several

Destructive Criticism

Micahs, and I do not know how many Zechariahs; if you claim that this new Daniel that we hear so much about belongs to an age four hundred and fifty years later than the Daniel of our childhood, you will have left a residuum of silly, incredible stuff, of no more use than an old almanac — a pious Arabian Night's tale, and really not worth paying postage on to send to Manila."

But goodness me, I did not realize that I had written so much. Here is my twelfth page, and I must stop short. Only let me say in a whisper how I wish you could have seen this little Miranda. I know you would have fallen in love with her right away. A college girl and evidently training herself for Christian work! I could not help feeling all the time what a dandy little wife she would have made for an old misogynist like yourself. Only I half suspect you are too late. Good-night, dear boy, and believe me ever faithfully yours,

MILCOLUMBUS.

Letters to Edward

Saturday, May 27, 1912.

MY DEAR EDWARD :

I arrived home last evening from my trip ; had a delightful time. I did very little work while away, just preached once and lectured once, and the rest of the time visited the music halls and the moving pictures and one or two galleries. Do you know, Edward, I love to be alone in a great city ? Mornings I would saunter up and down State Street studying face and figure, walk and window, making note and comment. It is the kind of solitude that appeals to me, not the solitude of the cloister but the solitude of the crowd. I had a few strolls through the Park and one afternoon a sail on the lake. So the week slipped by, and Thursday evening I took the train for my wife and bairnies ; but I was not so fortunate in the matter of company coming home as I was going out.

I was so glad to find your letter awaiting me at the bottom of a pile of others. But yours was the first one opened and it took me

Various Types of Elders

away back "over the hills and far away." I was especially interested in the way you sized up your session, if I may use that undignified word, and in the main your judgment is surprisingly correct. Parker, you know, used to be the president of the Kansas City and Council Bluffs Railroad. He, as you no doubt have been told more than once, is the money king of the church and is rated in the seven figures. And Elsie is a beautiful girl. Mrs. Parker prides herself greatly on being a Daughter of the Revolution. She is a society woman pure and simple and you know what that means as far as church work is concerned. You will not get much help out of her. Like a good many others, she is rather too exclusive to be much of a spiritual force. But Parker is a good fellow and you can trust him absolutely.

Bonar you will have found out long ere this too, I am sure, is a nephew of the famous Horatius and Andrew. He is a typical Scotchman from head to heel, an ardent Burns worshipper and the bluest kind of a Covenanter. You will find him about as much like his two uncles as hickory is like sugar cane. He is one

Letters to Edward

of the old-timers who believes the good Book from "Civer to Civer"—Balaam, Jonah, Daniel, Virgin Birth and all the rest. Some say that he does not believe in it soundly enough to keep the Ten Commandments, but I never knew anything really corroborative of that. But he certainly is a follower of John of Geneva if there ever was one. He accepts the doctrine of election wholesale—reprobation and all. He swallows the entire scheme—foreordination, original sin, eternal decree, golden pavement, fire, brimstone. You see he takes his theology as he takes his regular toddy—straight. A dear old lady, a little blunt perhaps in her observations, said to me one day that his breath smelled of the sulphur when it did not smell of the other stuff. But he is perfectly open about it. He frankly confesses to seeing no harm in taking a glass and with all his peculiarities I must say I like him immensely. Then, too, he is a capital critic. But he'll watch your theology like a hawk for a while.

Vanderveer is your silent man and a fine fellow he is. You can bank on him every day

A Faithful Elder

in the week. You can depend on him in the dark, as Moody used to put it. He is reliable right down to the roots. He will not say very much but he will be on hand every time the church doors are open. He cannot "give" largely but he will give himself and that is no mean item. I do not suppose that Vanderveer will ever tell you how he is enjoying your sermons, but all the same he will be the joy of your heart. You know some people are always telling you how much good your sermons are doing them and how they love to hear you preach, but they do not love enough to make them care to hear you more than once a week, or maybe once a month. As for trying to encourage you by coming out after dark—well, they never think of that. Somehow the night air does not agree with them. They always catch cold, the funny part of it being that the theatre never affects them so. So they just leave you alone to break your poor heart "hollering in an empty hall." I firmly believe, Edward, that more ministers are chilled and crushed by that neglected second service than by any other one thing. It seems such a cruel

Letters to Edward

shame to ask a man to spend two or three days on a message that ninety per cent. of the people never expect to hear. If our congregations realized how hard it is to preach to upholstery they would be more considerate. And even when one does get a half decent audience they are simply the floaters from some other church, so that the other fellow is left high and dry. I remember some years ago meeting one of these Sunday morning Christians on the street. He stopped me and said, "My, but I do enjoy your preaching. I hate to miss a single sermon. Isn't there something I can do to help you?" Well, I thought, here is my chance. And I blurted out, "Yes, Mr. Strayhorne, I don't really know a single way in which you could help me more than by filling one of those empty seats at our mid-week meeting." You should have seen the look that came over the poor fellow's face—and the stuttering. And you should have heard the excuses after he had gained his composure—it was really quite funny. But Vanderveer is not that kind. He is not much glitter, but he is all gold.

Wilkinson, on the other hand, is just the

Criticizing the Sermon

opposite. You may think him at first a little of a blarney. He will tell you every Sunday how grand your sermons are and how much good they are doing him, but he means it all. He really wants to help and he always manages to find a pleasant word. As you grow to know him you will learn to love him. Did you ever notice how contradictorily couples are sometimes mated, how often bright brainy fellows have know-nothing wives and vice versa, how sociable genial warm-hearted men have regular icebergs for their life companions? Well, the Wilkinson home is just the finest study in opposites I have ever known. She is a born critic, criticizes everybody and everything. I have never heard her say a word save by way of discouragement. I doubt if she ever heard a sermon that pleased her. I used to think sometimes that she did it feeling that it was incumbent on her to be a balance to her husband's enthusiasm. I had quite an amusing experience with an old college classmate of mine last summer. I was at the time up in the Provinces, and on my way down to the General Conference at Northfield. At Halifax

Letters to Edward

I went aboard the Boston boat. As an hour or so was to elapse before the time for sailing, I pulled my steamer chair over into a corner and sat glancing through a magazine. Looking up I was attracted by a man staring at me from the other side of the steamer. Every time I lifted my eye and looked at him, he was looking at me. Even when reading I was conscious of his persistent regard. We clashed so often that it became almost embarrassing. After a little he walked over and introduced himself. "I do not know what it is," he began, "but there is certainly something about your eyes that is familiar."

"Well," I retorted, "I do not know what it is either, but there is something about your hair that impresses me the same way."

"Well," he added, "my name is Canston."

"And mine," I volunteered, "is ——."

"Weren't you in —— College in 1890?"

"I was."

"So was I."

Well, this was interesting. We had been old classmates and cronies in college together for four years, but had not seen each other since

Meeting an Old Friend

our graduation day twenty-one winters ago. His hair was still a heavy pompadour but quite gray, and mine had grown thin and silvered too. Alas for the transformation of the years.

Well, we sat down and had a long chat of sixteen or twenty hours all the way to Boston, reviving old memories and relating new experiences. I had not heard that he had entered the ministry. It seems that after a two or three years' legal experiment he came into the Church, and after an abridged theological course he was ordained a priest in the Episcopal fold. And the most interesting part of his story was his matrimonial venture. He was thirty-five before he fell in love, about your age, my boy, so there is hope for you yet. And I want to tell you how it came about. It seems he was spending his vacation somewhere up in Cape Breton. If I remember rightly it was Baddeck. There was a Pittsburgh family summering there at the time. I have forgotten just how they met, but that doesn't matter. Anyway it was love at first sight—an only daughter, young, beautiful and rich. Think of it! But the amusing part of his story was his wedding trip. She

Letters to Edward

had never heard her husband preach, and naturally was anxious for that pleasure. In Boston he took her to hear Phillips Brooks, but she did not like the big Bishop at all, said he was "too torrential entirely," talked too fast. She could not catch more than half he said. In New York they went to hear Talmage in the morning and John Hall in the afternoon. But she was disgusted with Talmage, and very much disappointed in Hall. They spent a couple of weeks here in the town, during which time they heard Storrs and Van Dyke and Joseph Parker. I think Parker was on a visit to this country just at that time in connection with some Beecher anniversary at Plymouth Church. But she did not like any of them. Storrs was too "rhetorical and sonorous," and Van Dyke too poetical, and Parker too sensational or something. Well, you know the poor fellow began to get nervous. "I've certainly got a proposition on my hands," was the way he put it quietly to himself. "She will have to get used to a good deal simpler table than this honeymoon fare." And the first Sunday at home was quite an ordeal. He went into his pulpit trembling. He

Dr. Johnson and "Pilgrim's Progress"

said he had half a mind to slip a sleeping powder that morning into her coffee and send her on a short trip to Byloland. Only that he had to face the music some time, and it might as well be now as next Sunday.

But be not alarmed. It has turned out beautifully. They are just as happy as children, and now they have two Canstons of their very own. And I have no doubt but that she thinks him a star preacher too, for there is no accounting for tastes, and isn't it a fortunate thing that likes as well as dislikes differ so? Dr. Johnson was a keen judge of literature, but he was not infallible. Did he not consider "Pilgrim's Progress" a stupid and barbarous book? Matthew Arnold was a critic of exquisite taste as a rule, and we are rather surprised when he tells us that he did not care so very much for Tennyson or Shelley or Keats or even Shakespeare, while on the other hand he praises in fulsome measure Guérin, Joubert, and a number of lesser lights. I was interested yesterday, in reading Birrell's little volume "Obiter Dicta," to learn that Crabbe was the favorite poet of Byron and Cardinal Newman and Leslie Stephen and

Letters to Edward

Swinburne and Sir Walter Scott. Pretty choice lot of admirers, don't you think? Sir Walter, it seems, asked Lockhart to read to him the description of the "Players in the Borough" when he lay a-dying. It quite startled me that one of the minor poets had such an illustrious following. I could not get over it. And who knows but some of us minor preachers may have an admirer or two among the elect ones. We are at least usually pretty sure of our wives, and where could be found finer judges or more competent critics? But I have so much correspondence to answer, and so much extra work has accumulated during my absence, that I shall have to stop short and begin tackling it without a moment's delay. So good-bye for the present. Write soon.

And believe me

Ever most faithfully yours,

MILCOLUMBUS.

A Great Preacher

Sunday, June 4, 1912.

MY DEAR EDWARD :

This is Sunday evening, and although all my work is over, and I have had a fairly successful day of it, yet I am not in the best of humor. I preached twice and got along as well as usual, which of course is not saying much, and it is now almost ten o'clock, but before retiring I must drop you a line about my day's experience.

This afternoon I thought I would walk around and hear Gardiner. I have been anxious to hear him ever since he came to us, but felt it would be wiser to wait until the curiosity and the newness had worn off—a little bit at least. So to-day I decided the time had come and wended my way to the big auditorium on —— Street. I was politely shown to a good seat about the middle of the church. I had not been seated more than a minute or two, when the same usher that piloted me bowed a young couple into the pew directly in front, thereby filling the seat, which, by the way, had

Letters to Edward

six people in it. During the singing of the first anthem in walks Lord Somebody or other with his wife, striding up the aisle in all his touch-me-not glory, till he came to this same pew into which the young couple had been shown, when, standing like a statue at the door, he stared and glared as, in that old story of the Lamia, the sage eyed the serpent. There he stood and just kept staring, till pierced by the chill they felt it, and cuddled themselves up, like children in bed after hearing a ghost story. Just at that moment the usher came down and asked the young people if he could not take them to a "better seat." Well, do you know I was annoyed. It just spoiled the whole service for me. To think that this grand seigneur just wanted to walk in late in order to show his fleshly importance and the carnal power of his purse.

And I am not condemning this church alone. We are all in the same boat. Our metropolitan churches are all alike. If there is one place more than another where we would naturally expect to see love and hospitality and brotherly kindness and good fellowship flourish, surely it

Everybody Not Welcome

is inside the walls of the sacred temple where the golden rule is preached and incarnate love is worshipped. Inexplicable as it may seem, however, in no Los Angeles street car is more selfishness shown than in the house of God. And a man who would welcome you to his palatial home on Riverside Drive and invite you to his hospitable table every time you called, is often nothing less than ugly in the sanctuary. We put on our church bulletins "Everybody welcome," and we write it so boldly that you can read it easily at night, under the glare of the electric bulb, clear from the other corner, and yet it is a glaring untruth, for everybody is not welcome. I declare to you, Edward, my heart conviction is that the Church of Christ can never prosper till it has ceased to be a place where money can buy privilege, and a place where the poor man is reminded of his poverty. If there is one thing that will ever make me a Roman Catholic it will be this. In the house of God, as under the sod, men are equal or should be. I claim that the pew rental system is a stigma on the Protestant Church. I claim that the old Scotch

Letters to Edward

administration, with door and lock and key, is preferable to this bulletin-falsehood on the very front of God's temple. If a poor fellow walks into a trap with his eyes open he can blame nobody but himself, but when he walks in blindfolded he is to be pitied. Herrick Johnson says that the reason why working men do not come to church any more is simply because they are not wanted. And in my own mind there is not the shadow of a doubt about it. We can talk about it till our eyebrows get white. Our General Assemblies and Synods and Conventions can lecture us from now to the twenty-first century on how to reach the masses, but the answer is just as clear as the wrinkles on my face—the Church can have the masses when she wants them. She must create the proper atmosphere. There is a lack of homeliness in the Church. The home feeling that was once so much in evidence is well-nigh lost. What is the secret of the estrangement of the working man? It is just this, is it not? He does not feel at home; he feels uncomfortable; he feels unwanted. There is an unnatural atmosphere to him, a conventional

The Drawing Power of Brotherhood

starchness. What men demand to-day is brotherhood. The feeling that the man beside him cares for him counts more than the most eloquent discourse. If church people would just drop their little petty formalisms and put out a hand of warmth and welcome, they would be doing more to fill empty pews with real worshippers than the finest music on Manhattan. It is a remarkable fact that in the primitive Church as it came from the apostles this was the great drawing. Then later things became stiff and stereotyped, and to-day we are suffering from that unfortunate turn of affairs.

And why won't people "move over"? Why do little, thin, sallow-faced ninety pounders want a whole pew to themselves? A witty usher has said that ushering is like driving a nail into a rotten log. It gives a little each time—an inch or two—and if you keep on pounding you will at last hear a crack and then find a big hole in the centre.

But I have digressed, haven't I? I was going to tell you my Gardiner experience. I liked him very much indeed, and do you know the thing that impressed me most was the

Letters to Edward

wonderfully effective way in which he uses his voice. He has a splendid speaking tube to begin with and he knows how to manage it. Strange, isn't it, that so few of us have mastered that most effective secret, especially as they all tell us that it is such a simple thing. The mismanagement of the voice, I am tempted to think, has done more to spoil good sermons than any other one thing. Why cannot we "keep down"? I believe it was Berryer, the French lawyer, who remarked that he lost an important case on one occasion by pitching his voice too high. Actors seem to be the only class who know how to speak in a low conversational tone. I remember hearing Wendell Phillips. There was no straining, no screaming, no bellowing, no gasping, nothing preachy. Every word was quiet, mild, clear-cut, distinct. Every word was honored and every word went home. He spoke for ninety minutes, but that marvellous voice never for an instant lost its edge. Every tone fell like a benediction. There were no elocutionary frills, no forcing of the throat muscles as a cruel driver whips his tired steed, and yet from first to last he

The Secret of Quiet Power

held his audience as by magic. It was a triumph of vocal skill. The most of us, I fear, have a strange impression that vehemence is persuasiveness, and that whatever else we may or may not do, one thing at least we must do every once in a while—we must make a great noise. Some are so violent as to awaken in my own breast a suspicion of their sincerity. Their earnestness is apt to seem feigned. And I always think, when listening to them, of Lyman Beecher's confession, "I always holler when I haven't anything to say." If I were a professor of homiletics in a theological seminary I believe I would have two paintings hung up behind my desk; one, that portrait representing Napoleon with his arms crossed and staring across the water; the other, that famous drawing of Ruben's, viz., "Hercules beating the air." I would have them as a silent sermon on the impressiveness of being calm.

Last week one of my old classmates called to see me. I had not seen him for twenty years. He has a church somewhere in Virginia. Well, it was Wednesday afternoon and I said to him,

Letters to Edward

"Cannot you wait over until to-morrow and come to prayer-meeting with me to-night and give us a little talk along some line of Christian experience?" I felt even when I was giving the invitation that I was doing something risky, because it is always a more or less unsafe thing to invite into your pulpit any one of whom you are not sure. But he consented and I said to him by way of preparation, "Now we only have a few people, about seventy-five or eighty perhaps, and I generally give them just a little quiet talk along some expository lines." Well, I had never heard him preach before and I can assure you we had a right inflammatory time of it. I sat beside him on the platform and I was in mortal dread till he was through. He is one of those rambustious fellows, not so much boisterous, although he is by no means calm, as violent. He throws his arms around like maples in a whirlwind. I once heard a story of a little fellow who whispered to his mother in church one day, "Ma, why don't somebody go up and fight him?" He thought the preacher was challenging the audience to personal combat.

Pulpit Mannerisms

And really if I had not understood what the man was saying, I might have imagined something of the same thing. And the funniest part of it all was that his sermon was on peace. I know you will think I am coloring the tale, but honor bright his text was Philippians iv. 7. Then he had the most horrible trick of hitting the Bible. Oh, how that habit grates on me! When he was about half through his talk, I was so struck with the frequency of the blows that I began to count, and would you believe it, from then to the end he pelted that poor book twenty-nine times—making fully fifty-eight in all, I am sure, and that in a talk of twenty-five minutes. It got so on my nerves at last that I did not hear a word the man was saying. I found myself waiting for that regular, persistent, periodical whack on the Bible. One good lady said to me next day, “The poor fellow’s fist must be swollen quite a bit.” I wonder why some preachers have such a spite against the good Book. I remember hearing of two Scotch lassies who were praising their different Dominies. “I think our meenisther did weel the day,” one remarked ;

Letters to Edward

“he gar’d the stoor flee oot o’ the cushion.” To which the other replied, “Stoor oot o’ the cushion, hout our mon sin’ he cam wi us has driv the guts clean oot o’ twa Bibles and three hymn-books.”

But, my dear boy, I must close. I wish you would tell me more about yourself. You have not been writing a line of late about that cough. Now you know how anxious I am. So please write me in full in your next how you are standing the work, how you feel generally, whether or no you are gaining in weight. Tell me how you like sleeping outdoors. Do tell me all.

And believe me

Faithfully yours,

MILCOLUMBUS.

Meddling in Money Matters

June 19, 1912.

MY DEAR EDWARD :

I received your letter the other day, and it just did my heart good. I am so pleased that you are keeping so well and standing the work so splendidly. For it is no snap. I know all about it. The magnitude of the task used often to appal me. The only thing that disturbed my joy and peace of mind was in reading what you say about some of the officers having suggested that you take a week off, and go around and see if you cannot raise a little money for that proposed new chapel on the south side. I cannot understand what they could have meant. For goodness' sake tell me please who it was that first suggested such a thing. But how glad I am that you just stood up straight and said "No." Stick to it, my boy. They are a splendid body of men, none better anywhere, only do not let them talk you into the idea that you can get more money than they can. That may be true, but even if it is true, your duty to go out and gun for dollars

Letters to Edward

does not follow. You have not got the time even if you had the strength for any such foolish firing. I have always taken the ground that we ministers ought never to have anything whatever to do with the financial burdens of our churches. I declare I have seen more pastorates broken up from meddling in money matters than I would care to mention. I have known some ministers who did not seem to understand what a Board of Trustees was for.

The trouble, you see, is that so many in our congregations think we have not enough to do to keep us out of mischief. Why, didn't a good deacon actually say to me one day, "Doctor, I wish you would call down at my office often; I presume you have a good deal of time on your hands"? At first I thought he was joking. But I have since learned that the impression is quite wide-spread. Lots of people, and some of them not illiterate people either, seem to think that a preacher's life is an exquisitely easy life. A dear old soul in my first charge made it her rule to call on me every Monday morning and spend an hour or two, to keep me, as she phrased it, "from getting lonely."

Fritterdays

I was young and unmarried, and in her kind motherly way she wanted to cheer me in my solitude and help me "*pass the time.*" I could not get her to see in any gentle way that my time was really precious, and that my library was most excellent companionship. "Fritterdays" I believe Marcus Dods called these people. Of course some clergymen like such things. They like to dabble in everything—business matters, gossip, family troubles, scandal, lectures, functions, after-dinner speeches, everything. They like to be consulted about the pew rents, the annual coal supply, the tuning of the pipe organ and the janitor's salary, but I have never known of a case where their pulpit work was not complained of more or less in consequence. I think that church ought to be shamed that puts its pastor on as chairman of their building committee, and the minister who allows his name to go on is to be pitied for being so easily worked. Those meddlesome fellows who think that nothing about the church can be done properly unless they have a hand in it, are not, in my judgment, worthy successors of Him who told us to be "clothed

Letters to Edward

with humility." No minister has any right to get mixed up in money matters, or business matters of any kind in the running of his church. At least that is how I feel about it. The apostles did not do it. Why should we? Instead of easing our people we should try to lay burdens on their shoulders, and certainly no burden belongs there so appropriately as the burden of financial administration. The average church these days rivals a California gold-of-Ophir rosebush anyway in the number of its budding societies, clubs, circles, leagues, guilds, brigades, et cetera, cetera; and the pastor who feels it his bounden duty to put a finger in all these pies is going to come to grief homiletically. His work is not commercial but spiritual. Let him stick to his last. If he has any time to spare let him put it on his sermons. In the end it will pay. I declare, Edward, the average man, who prepares two discourses each week and conducts a prayer-meeting, has anywhere from one to five funerals, makes two or three dozen pastoral calls on the sick and needy, attends to I don't know how many committee meetings, besides seeing half a dozen book agents who want a list

Pulpit Power

of all the members of his church and their addresses, not to speak of the beggars and gossips and soreheads and all the other agents who claim a few hours each week of his time, and then attending to an avalanche of letters almost as large as an average country editor's—that man, it seems to me, is crowded sufficiently already to forgive him if once in a while he lets slip his morning devotions.

But I fear that I have let my feelings run away with my pen, and anyway it was not what I started out to write about when I sat down. I was going to tell you a little more of my Gardiner experience. I have been thinking of late a great deal of that strange something or other which we call pulpit power. There certainly never was a time when it was so much in demand, never a time when it commanded such a price. Even the little churches that write almost every week asking me to recommend them a “good man,” even these small, weak, struggling organizations up and down the country have made up their minds that the man who has the honor of ministering to them in holy things must be quite a good

Letters to Edward

deal of a preacher, and the marvel of it all would seem to be that our schools of the Prophets, finding out how many Pauls and Apollos are needed, do not turn out a larger supply, when the country is flooded with so many of us who have apparently been fashioned in the common mould, and run in the common ruts. And so I was greatly interested in hearing Gardiner only that wretched little episode put me in bad humor for a while. But I soon got over it and settled down. And I was struck with the man's style. What he said did not seem to me so very remarkable as the way he said it, the choice wording and phrasing, the confidential manner, the simple speech, the pleasing gesture. He is certainly a man with a very marked style, and it is his own, seemed indeed as if he sacrificed everything to it. I cannot say that his is the "art that conceals art," for it looked to me to be written out over everything. It was almost too prominent. I have never heard any one just like him. He gets so very familiar and yet without becoming offensive. He spoke just forty minutes but he never once lost us.

The Gift of Humor

He is mightily interesting and fresh and clear. I would say that he abhors the vague, almost too much so, perhaps because I think most great preachers like to leave a little margin for the imaginative and the mystical. If I were to make a criticism it would be that he labored a wee bit too hard to make us see that he was logical. At every transition he would sum up what he had said in some definite concrete outline. Then, too, I think he lacks the gift of humor for a man who always preaches, I am told, from forty minutes to an hour. There is no let down; it is all serious and thoughtful from start to finish. His sermon was on the ministry of cheer, and he gave me the impression that he felt he was looking into the eyes of tired people, people who had come there for uplift and wing and tonic, people who wanted a breath of spring and a breeze from the heavenly places—and he certainly gave it to us, sweet and bracing and cooling. How quickly our sermons age! Only a little while and lo they are gray and bald and toothless. Every time I look down into my own barrel I am more convinced than ever what a dry,

Letters to Edward

musty, old receptacle of a place it is. But this message of his was fresh; it was fragrant; it was alive. If he fished it out of a pile of old papers—and he most likely did, for I don't imagine that he has got down to writing anything new as yet—he certainly in some strange way, or perhaps out of some recent experience of his own, infused new blood into it.

And really, Edward, I think the average congregation will pardon almost anything if what we give them is only warm and vital. I remember hearing a story once of a sculptor who was comparing a celebrated classical horse with his own. Faults he found everywhere, but, said he, "I must confess the villainous thing is living and mine is not." Unfortunately we do not have the opportunity of hearing many sermons, but speaking for myself I read quite a few, and the most of them are so lifeless. I am a little suspicious if we are not all a bit too apt to bury our Master beneath a snow-bank of culture. Most of us know the Greek and the Hebrew a heap sight better than we know the human. I have forgotten who it was that said that while Orton was lighting a

The Secret of Personality

match, Bunyan was setting the world on fire, and I often wonder if a passionate rather than a profound pulpit is not the need of the hour. But Gardiner's personality, I am inclined to believe, is his strongest asset. He preaches out of his own heart and the old becomes new. And after all is not that what counts most? Dante has been called the first great poet who made a poem out of himself. In Samson Agonistes Milton is his own Samson. In Coningsby Lord Beaconsfield is his own Sidonia. Was not Byron his own Don Juan? And if we preachers are going to hide our personalities are we not withholding our most effective weapon? But some Sunday afternoon I am going to go around again, and then I will tell you more. Just now there is such a mob of people that the place is uncomfortable. Every preacher in the city is taking lessons. I counted twenty-seven round about me in my own territory that afternoon. But after a while all this will wear away, and then I'll thither again. So good-night. And believe me, ever faithfully yours,

MILCOLUMBUS.

Letters to Edward

July 3, 1912.

MY DEAR EDWARD :

I received a rather funny letter yesterday from a church over here on Long Island. I preached for them one Sunday evening this past winter, and now they write asking me to recommend a man to them for their pulpit. The letter amused me somewhat because of the last sentence it contained. This is the sentence, "We will fall into line with your recommendation, only he must not be over thirty-five and he must have a sensible wife." Well, I read it a couple of times and then I called Helen and then we laughed. They are willing to accept my choice only he must be more or less of a boy, and he must have a prudent, politic helpmeet. They will trust me with everything but two things, the man's age and his wife. I have half a mind to write and ask how much the wife's salary is to be. But I guess I had better not. The last lady of the manse, it seems, was a regular mischief-maker and got them into all sorts of hot water, and the good old elders and

The Ministry of Youth

deacons are not going to get scalded again if they can help it. The other day Barnes invited me out to Englewood to a game of golf. We were sitting at noon eating our lunch and I said to him, "Barnes, you remember Harlan, don't you, of our year?" "Yes, indeed," he replied. "I saw him only the other day." "What has been the trouble?" I further inquired. "We all considered him the bright and shining star of the class. Why has he not made good?" "Oh, the poor fellow," he answered quite tenderly, "has been unfortunate in his marriage. She makes trouble for him everywhere he goes."

Then he must not be over thirty-five. The dead line used to be forty-five, then a little later it dropped to forty, now it seems to have come down another five pegs nearer the cradle. According to the Constitution of the United States a man cannot be a member of the House of Representatives until he is twenty-five years of age nor a Senator until he is thirty. He cannot be elected President until he is thirty-five. The Fathers of the Constitution honored age in the framing of our government. The

Letters to Edward

Good Book, too, reveres the hoary head. Moses was called to lead the children of Israel at eighty. Paul was an old man when he did his greatest work. Caleb and Joshua did their best work after the time limit had passed, as also did Daniel, the aged premier of Babylon. Paul said to Timothy, "Let no one despise thy youth," but the words would sound well-nigh satirical to-day. Once gray hairs were a crown of grace; to-day I fear they are fast becoming a crown of disgrace.

The first sine qua non to-day, it would seem, is youth. No church wants an old preacher. The old warrior is carted off to the ecclesiastical bargain counter along with other shelf-worn and faded articles. Do you know I really cannot find it in my heart sometimes to greatly blame some ministers for telling little white fibs about their age. One of my dearest friends in college was Will Creighton. You have often heard me speak of Will. His father had been a minister. He said to me the day we graduated, after I had told him that I was thinking very seriously of going down to Princeton in the fall to study theology, "Well,

A Sad Example

I wish I could see my way clear to go along with you, but do you know I dread the fiery furnace my poor father went through. His salary was \$700 and I remember the small dribblets in which it was paid—always a month or two behind. At forty-six he resigned his church and never seemed to be able to secure another. I've heard him say more than once, 'I wish I didn't look so old,' 'I wish my hair wasn't so white;' the poor man became a book agent to support us children, and died three years later of disappointment, and a broken heart I guess."

But really, Edward, I must say I feel very strongly on both these matters. I think this modern craze for boyism in the pulpit is responsible for not a little of what we are hearing of late about its weakness and unpopularity and decline. And as for these poor wives of ours—well, I wrote a few verses the other day for our Alpha-Delta, and I am going to send them along. They will tell you what I think exactly. Some months ago there came to my knowledge the case of a prominent minister near New York here, who was being considered

Letters to Edward

quite seriously by a pulpit committee for a certain church. They had about made up their minds to present his name to the congregation for acceptance, when one of the members suggested that possibly it would be a wise move to make some inquiries concerning the Mrs. in the case. So, said brother of the committee who had raised the doubt was commissioned to travel some several hundred miles, and search on the sly among the female fraternity of their would-be pastor's present charge for any rumors that might be emanating from the manse. The facts gathered were that she was of a quiet and retiring nature, not of much assistance to her husband in his official duties, which seemingly innocent information, curious to say, must have ended the case, for nothing more was done. Is it not cruel how some churches insist on dragging the poor minister's wife out into the open and subjecting her to the criticisms of the crowd? Is she cultured? Is she pretty? Is she popular? Has she a private income and how much? Can she hold her own against the upper circles? Is she gifted with good sound horse sense? I am driven to use that not overly

The Minister's Wife

elegant figure because of what Armstrong, the Chicago banker, said to me the other evening. I sat next to him at the Pennsylvania dinner and he was telling me of the time that he made the change from Minneapolis to his present position, and this is how he put it: "When I was in Minneapolis I was sitting in the seat driving, but I hadn't been a week in Chicago when I found out that I was in the traces." And do you know I have about come to the conclusion that these good wives of ours are in the traces—and pulling the biggest part of the load.

But really I think it is nothing less than a shame how the average congregation insists that its minister's wife is public property. I always took it that my wife was my wife, not my church assistant. Why then so indispensable that she be orator, preacher, organizer, congregational visitor, funeral director and parish nurse? The scripture warrant I certainly would much like to have pointed out to me where she has been commissioned to superintend every society in the congregation. If her ideas are that woman's first duty is to her family, are they not entitled to deference? If

Letters to Edward

her convictions are Pauline, that woman should keep silence in prayer-meeting, are they not worthy of respect? If she feels it her duty to stay at home and train her little ones for the Kingdom and make her husband happy, what concern is it of the King's Daughters? If her husband is satisfied it would seem as if the Women's Aid Society ought to be. To be sure if the church wishes to hire her and pay her a stated stipend for making eight hundred or one thousand calls every winter, then, of course, that is a different matter; but so long as things are run the way they are, let us hope that the wives of our ministers will stand firm upon their womanhood and independence and self-respect, and refuse to be made a battledore and shuttlecock for the whims and notions of a lot of whimperers who think they own her, but who if the truth were only fully stated would be told that they have no more claim upon her than they have upon the wife of their physician or attorney—not one whit more.

But here are the lines I wrote for our club dinner. And remember they are not passed on by way of hint or warning. For if the rumor

The Minister's Wife

that has just come to me be true about the little pool where you are throwing the line, you do not need my advice. She is a sweet little soul and right glad am I to know that she is nibbling. Only, you shy canny rascal, why did you not tell me something about it first? . . . But I suppose I will have to forgive you this time. I will if you will only tell me everything in your next. First of all, is it true? Then, how much is true? How far along have things progressed? I could write you a whole cyclopedia of nice things. I always admired her and now I admire you, my boy, more than ever for your good judgment. . . . And so here is my hand and there is nothing in it but my heart. Fisherman's luck to you—of the right sort. Only better not show the ode till she's safely landed; it might scare her.

And believe me

Ever faithfully yours,

MILCOLUMBUS.

Letters to Edward

July 17, 1912.

MY DEAR EDWARD :

It has been raining all day to-day and so I missed my regular weekly round on the links. There are four of us in Presbytery who have formed a golf attachment for each other, and we spend every Monday either at Apawamis or Dunwoodie. We do not mind the rain as a rule ; in fact, last Monday we played all day holding up our umbrellas as we seesawed along, coming in in the evening with feet soaking wet. But this morning it poured so that we agreed by 'phone that it would be wiser not to venture out. So I have been housed all day, and now it is four o'clock. The sky is still overcast and there are no signs of clearing. I think we are in for an ugly squally night.

I have spent the whole day reading Benson. First I took up his recent volume on Ruskin and liked it fairly well, and this afternoon I have turned over about one hundred pages of his "Silent Isle." I do not think either book quite equal to some of his others ; in fact, some

Benson

chapters in the "Silent Isle" I consider very weak—the thought, I mean. The second chapter on love is perfect folderol to me, but then he is an old bachelor and what can you expect? I am afraid he is writing too much, for I do not think any man can turn out the amount of stuff that he is publishing every year and not fall down. It seems to be our American craze for quantity and bigness. Some of his books have helped me greatly. Of course his religious views are unsatisfying. He is quite a contradiction. You read one chapter and you put him down as a devout believer; then the next chapter will be out and out agnosticism. He is evidently drifting. I notice in this eighth essay he claims that the religious life is a vocation for some, just as the artistic life is a vocation for others; it is simply one of the paths to God, and he thinks it better that those who love public worship should desire only the companionship of like-minded people that the harmony be not broken. But I like the man's spirit immensely, and his style is certainly pleasing. Take, for instance, this from the very last page I have just read:

Letters to Edward

“But what is, after all, the deepest charm that invests the old road is the thought of all the sad and tender associations clothing it in the minds of so many vanished generations. Even an old house has a haunting grace enough, as a place where men have been born and died, have loved and enjoyed and suffered; but a road like this, ceaselessly trodden by the feet of pilgrims, all of them with some pathetic urgency of desire in their hearts, some hope unfulfilled, some shadow of sickness or sin to banish, some sorrow making havoc of home, is touched by that infinite pathos that binds all human hearts together in the face of the mystery of life. What passionate meetings with despair, what eager upliftings of desirous hearts, must have filled the minds of the feeble and travel-worn companies that made their slow journeys along the grassy road! And one is glad to think, too, that there must doubtless have been many that returned gladder than they came, with the burden shifted a little, the shadow lessened, or at least with new strength to carry the familiar load. For of this we may be sure, that however harshly we may despise what we call superstition, or however firmly we may wave away what we hold to have been all a beautiful mistake, there is some fruitful power that dwells and lingers in places upon which the hearts of men have so concentrated their swift and poignant emotions—for all, at least, to whom the soul is more than the body, and whose thoughts are not bounded and confined by the mere material shapes among which,

Benson

in the days of our earthly limitations, we move uneasily to and fro."

Isn't that beautiful? Why, it seems to me Ruskin could not improve on that. And his whole manner is so free and easy. There is nothing of what he himself calls the "weight of responsibility." He moves with such confidence and grace and charming simplicity. The artist is salient on every page. He certainly has it in him to do standard work, only I wish, as I intimated already, that he would not try to do so much.

But gloomy as the day has been, and disappointed personally as I am at being compelled to be a shut-in, I am feeling, notwithstanding, very happy. My work is going along so nicely. We had our third communion yesterday, and ten united with the church on confession—seven of them being young men. Wasn't that splendid? Of course ten may seem a small number to you, but you have no idea what we ministers have to contend with here on Manhattan. You see this is foreign missionary ground. I really consider myself a foreign missionary. And I must say I feel quite encouraged. It has all

Letters to Edward

been done in such a quiet way. We have had no extra services, no paid evangelist, nothing but the simple story presented as effectively as a very ordinary sky pilot, with no talent to speak of, could deliver it, followed up by good faithful personal work. I have a capital assistant for that task, so intuitive and tactful. He keeps his eyes open and watches for new faces, and notes impressions and responses. Then we have a woman visitor, a sort of deaconess, worth, too, her weight in gold. And, Edward, the longer I am in the work the more I am convinced that the personal way is the only way. They have just had a big hubbub over here in ———. I met one of the pastors yesterday who was one of the front men in the movement, and I asked him what the results were. He told me very frankly that he was disappointed, that practically nobody but church people came near the meetings, and as for reaching the outsider it was a flat failure. The trouble with all these peripatetic evangelists, I cannot help but feel, is that they are all trying to get up a revival, just as rain-storms were at one time thought to be produced by the roar

Getting Up a Revival

of cannon and smoke of guns. But this theory we all know has been abandoned, and the church is a long time, it seems to me, in learning that revivals cannot be got up by human excitement any more than thunder squalls or earthquakes. A church may be as inactive as a catacomb, as lifeless as a potter's field, as cold as an iceberg, doing nothing for the great causes of the Kingdom, neglectful, indifferent. An evangelist is invited. A sort of side show is introduced to accompany the exhibition of the Cross—something exciting to tickle the people; it may be an assault on Unitarianism or Romanism or the pretensions of the holiness life, or perhaps some operatic performer is the drawing card, some ex-fan or ex-pugilist. They shout, sing, organize, make vows, get hundreds to sign cards, and report a glorious awakening. I am not caricaturing; the dear only knows it is too solemn a thing for caricature, and too sad.

But we are gradually finding out at last—at least I think we are—that revivals are not manufactured. They grow and they grow slowly. They do not come up gourd-like in the night, but rather, like the oak, through weeks

Letters to Edward

and months and sometimes years. They strike their roots deep down into the life of the community. They are harvests gleaned after a faithful sowing of the seed and a patient tilling of the soil. Another objection I have to so many of these professional men on the field is the financial encumbrance. There is always such a dunning for money, or else the churches are taxed. And with me this rasps. Why, the —— campaign cost \$50,000, I understand, and I understand, too, that they are away behind. The whole thing is too commercial. There is a tendency to exaggerate the importance of an intricate machinery. Immediate results are imperative, and to this end all must be sacrificed. It may be necessary to improve a tale to make it telling. Numbering must not be done too conscientiously lest there seem a lack of sheaves. And then, anyway, I think the whole crusade makes for a type of piety that is emotional rather than rational. Do not mistake me, please. I am not intimating that there is no place for feeling in our religious work, for I think there is, a very large place, only it is not, and never should be given, the

Professional Evangelism

chief place. Weeping over a string of pathetic stories may be quite commendable, but the tears as a rule do not go down very deep nor last very long. Only the surface of the life is moved. It is a very simple matter to make some folks weep. They can almost be made to weep over a table of logarithms if the voice is plaintive. Emotion is like steam in the boiler. If it drives the locomotive, well and good, but if it only puffs and blows and hisses, and does not pull us along the path of duty, then it is harmful. Oh, I have seen so much that is distasteful to me about it all that I guess I am hopelessly prejudiced. I have seen revival meetings held. I have seen the evangelist escorted to the train by crowds of converts singing gospel hymns that are anything but dignified—"Nearer My God to Thee," for instance, to the tune of "Robin Adair," and a lot of other doggerel rhymes and sentimental ditties. I have heard them say, "We must carry this enthusiasm into the Church." I have seen them start with a great blare of horns and beating of drums. Six months passed by and the prayer-meeting was again in the hands of old "Father

Letters to Edward

Faithful and good Sister Silent," and their religious life was dead, if that were possible, than ever.

But I did not mean to blow my own trumpet when I started out, nor to decry other methods. No doubt there is good in all and I will try hard not to be cynical. Only I do like my own quieter way—and yours—so much better. Next week I am going off on my vacation. I do not feel tired but I will be glad for the rest. The life here is awfully strenuous. We want to get our children out into the fields where they can climb the trees and jump the fences and play with the foals and the calves and the chickens. This is a dreadful place to train up children. When I watch the boys playing baseball here on the avenue, and dodging the trolley-cars and automobiles, it becomes really pathetic. No one with a family of little ones ought ever to live in New York if he can help it. The life is too unnatural for a child. So, till you hear from me again, bye-bye. Address me at the old farm. And believe me

Ever faithfully yours,

MILCOLUMBUS.

At the Old Home

Monday, July 31, 1912.

MY DEAR EDWARD :

Well, here I am away up at the old home and in the same old house where I was born—I will not say how many years ago. Of course I know you know, but then I have come to that point where I prefer not to dwell on the multiplying years. Father and mother are still here and right smart too for octogenarians, and my little boy whom I have taken along with me is intensely interested in everything, especially the haymow where his father used to play hide-and-seek, and the stream where he used to fish, and the cherry trees he used to climb, and the old grange generally.

I find things pretty much as they were when I last visited here five years ago. The farm has one hundred acres, about half of which is still timbered. As I sit writing I can see, and almost hear, the blown fire of the smithy down in the hollow. I can see close by the tall pine tree which I used to climb, and from one of the limbs of which I once fell and broke my wrist,

Letters to Edward

and I can see the pale fallow on the farther side of the fen with its little brook curving through it, where I used to hunt for frogs and muskrats, and I can see over on the other hill the old well with its moss-covered bucket, and I can see the sheep pasturing far off on the downs. What a peaceful bucolic picture it all is! But I cannot keep down a swelling of sadness. The old place is beginning to look unkempt and neglected. The barns are getting very black and dingy looking; the fences need whitewashing; the cart and truck and wheelbarrow and all the implements I can see are beginning to show signs of wear and weather. I find the country so still and lonely; seems as if everything were sound asleep. Last night the air was so calm that not even the poplar leaves were moving. In a wakeful mood long after midnight I thought I could almost hear the old elm tree, just by my window, breathe. And then so many of the old faces are missing! There is not a corner of the place that is not transfigured by a touch of pathos and sweetness and tender memories. In the twilight I find myself unconsciously humming an old song

At the Old Home

that we boys and girls used to sing long, long ago without knowing much of its meaning at the time.

“ Where is now the merry party
I remember long ago,
Laughing round the Christmas fireside,
Brightened by its ruddy glow ? ”

But I am afraid you will think me in a rather disconsolate mood this morning, but not so. Just a bit sentimental after my long absence and return. You do not wonder, do you ? We arrived Saturday evening and did not have time to unpack our things until a little while ago. I always have such a task deciding on the literature I had better take on my summer outing, because I feel that a dozen books or so is about all I ought to tax my trunk with, considering the amount of clothing, and playthings for the boy, and other impedimenta that my wife insists on our bringing. So this time I consulted Ex-President Eliot so as to find out what not to take, and boiled the number down to ten. I think it was Bronson Alcott, was it not, who once remarked that Thoreau was a good fellow to become acquainted with in order to learn how not to

Letters to Edward

live. First of all I decided on a volume of Brierley's. So I threw in his "Life and the Ideal." I like Brierley immensely. I think he is wonderfully fresh and suggestive and full of good sermon stuff. He is quite a considerable scientist, although a little careless sometimes, I regret to say, in his facts; but then that is not so important a matter to an essayist. For instance, I don't know how many times in his books he speaks of the temperature of the sun as being so many million degrees Fahrenheit (I forget the exact number) but everybody knows that that old theory has been long since discarded. It is not anywhere near the million mark; sixty thousand, I understand, is more nearly the reckoning now. I once asked Professor Hale about it and if I remember correctly these were his figures. Then I have four other volumes of essays from which you will infer, and correctly, that the essay is my favorite form of reading—Benson, Amiel, Montaigne and Hazlitt's "Table Talk." Then I have one volume of Joseph Parker. Parker is to me the Prince of preachers. None like him! I think he is the most wonderful pulpit orator in

Joseph Parker

the history of the Christian church. I know he was dramatic and eccentric and odd, and I guess there is no doubt that he played more or less to the gallery, but for sheer brain-power and interpretation and spiritual insight and originality and epigram and human interest, give me Parker every time. I was in London once for three months. The first two months I went to hear every great divine in the city; three or four times on Sundays, and between prayer-meetings and harvest homes, etc., as many times more during the week; but the last month Parker was all I wanted, twice on Sunday and every Thursday noon. I felt that they were all pygmies compared with this mighty inimitable man. And his books have inspired me since more than the books of any other homilist. I know that I have copied him more or less. I can see him now shaking that great shaggy head, with its little eyes like an elephant's. I can almost feel that funny sensation he used to send through me in those climaxes of his. Then in the poetical line I have brought along a volume of Keats. He is, I rather think, my favorite poet. And as for

Letters to Edward

novels—well, I am pretty slack on novels but I threw in “Tom Jones,” to read for the fourth time. Most ministers, I know, take not much else on their vacations, but as for myself I get very little good out of them. The last novel I read that I thoroughly enjoyed was “David Harum.” A year or so ago I picked up a story of David Graham Phillips’, “Old Wives for New,” but I got so disgusted with it before I was half through that I threw it down and never finished it. No doubt everybody ought to read a good wholesome story occasionally, but when I walked through a bookstore in Boston the other day and saw the stacks of novels piled around, I judged that the clerks could hardly be selling much of anything else, and when I glance at the book reviews in our newspaper supplements, and note that almost all are reviews of novels, one almost feels like asking if these are the only things published that are worth reviewing. We are becoming swamped with a flood of foolish romance. And then once more I have a volume of John Burroughs’ and my “Westcott and Hort.” So now what

A Gaelic Sermon

do you think of my five foot shelf for a summer's reading?

Yesterday morning, it being Sunday, of course we all went to church. I enjoyed meeting old friends. The congregation is a typical country one, descendants of the Scotch Highlanders who came out in the *Polly* in 1805. There is a Gaelic service at ten o'clock followed by one in English at eleven. I attended both and although I did not understand a word of the former, still I quite enjoyed it. They follow the old Highland custom of a precentor who first recites two lines of the stanza in a singsong sort of way, and then leads them in the singing of these lines. It is very quaint and doleful, especially so as Gaelic tunes are usually on the minor key. I cannot say that the English service was very profitable. The minister announced a text but I am afraid he did not stick to it very long. He reminded me of the little urchin who when asked why he stood throwing stones into the wood replied that he supposed there were birds in there somewhere and perhaps he would hit one if he kept on firing. The text was, "What I say

Letters to Edward

unto you I say unto all, watch," and his line of thought was, watch what habits you form, watch what companions you choose, watch what books you read, all of which, no doubt, is in the passage if we first interpolate as the critics say. I think it is Baedeker who says of a certain town in Italy, "You will find fresh eggs here and butter and milk and excellent fruit provided you carry these delicacies along with you." But I am not so sure if I would not rather have my minister choose a text and say nothing more about it than one of those ultra broad fellows who gives it to you first in Hebrew, then in the Septuagint, then doctored up according to the latest Higher Criticism, and then finally concluding that it is not true anyway, being an interpolation of some redactor or other. I am getting to feel that I do not much care how far off a man wanders in his sermon if he only wanders to my heart. But I am going to close and go out and do some more exploring round the old farm. Good-bye. And believe me

Ever faithfully yours,

MILCOLUMBUS.

Amiel

August 7, 1912.

MY DEAR EDWARD :

I have been reading Amiel all the week and I cannot tell you how much I am enjoying him. Get the book by all means and eat it ; it is the best food I have tasted in many a day. The edition I have is the one translated by Mrs. Humphrey Ward. She prefaces it with a most helpful introduction.

I am so glad that I took the book along ; in fact, I have not been reading very much of anything else. I was telling you in my last what a job I have every summer in getting ready to migrate up here. What clothes to take along, whether or no to put my Prince Albert in the trunk and my silk hat, how many suits I shall likely require ! Will I need my summer overcoat or my winter one ? What about golf bags and tennis rackets and bathing suits ? And then the books ! That, after all, is the biggest problem. For books are exasperatingly heavy in the checking room. Some summers ago when about to cross the continent

Letters to Edward

I was so overfreighted, or overweighted shall I say, that when the baggageman said, "Six dollars excess, please," I felt like telling him to confiscate the whole Saratoga. I do not know whether or not I am different from other people, but I certainly do dislike to pay the railroads excess baggage. It makes me feel somewhat like when one's child is crossing the boundary line between twelve and thirteen. My little fellow was born on the twenty-ninth of June, and when a year ago, on the third day of July, he and I were starting for Canada and I was over in Cook's office purchasing my ticket, the agent asked me how old he was. I said twelve years and three days. It was only three days but it made a difference of twelve dollars.

Well, anyway, as I told you already, I only brought ten this time, and eight of these are still in the trunk. The only ones I have fished out as yet are Amiel and my "Westcott and Hort." . . . I believe it is now getting to be pretty generally admitted that the "Journal" has won a permanent place in literature. It is one of the books that is bound to live, and it is going to live because, like the Scriptures, it is a

Amiel

living book. It will not live much perhaps in the public eye ; it will never be one of the ten best sellers, but it is a book in which a germ of life has been silently and, I was going to say, secretly deposited. . . . I am thoroughly enjoying it. Amiel is the Hamlet of the inner life.

I think one secret of the charm of these pages is due to the accident of birth and to the unique opportunities the author had in the matter of study and training. He was born, as you of course know, and spent his early life, in the religious atmosphere of Geneva ; then he was educated in Berlin where German thought and style and methods vitally affected his dreamy nature and innate mysticism. And then he was of French descent, writing entirely in the French language and knowing intimately the French character. It was a wonderful combination. Renan and Bourget both claim that a great deal of the success of the "Journal" is due to the mingling of German and French elements which it contains.

I was very much interested in reading that as a professor he made no mark, that his lec-

Letters to Edward

tures were considered dry and uninteresting. One of his pupils, M. Alphonse Rivier, until lately professor of international law in the University of Brussels, writes these words, "We never learnt to appreciate him at his true worth. We did justice no doubt to his genius, his vast stores of reading. We liked him for his indulgences, his kindly wit. But I look back without any sense of pleasure to his lectures."

Isn't it odd, Edward, how this is not infrequently the case with some of our brethren of the cloth? There's our mutual friend ———. I doubt if I ever heard a more delightful conversationalist. He can charm little groups around the dinner table by the hour, but the very moment he climbs into a pulpit all that freshness and lightness of touch seem to take flight. I never could quite understand it. He reminds me of a nasturtium leaf when dipped in water; it comes out dry as sawdust. And here is this wonderful genius who in his "Journal" is perfectly fascinating and yet in the lecture room, it seems, he was simply a "dusty compendium of Hegelian philosophy."

I do not know just what it is about the book

Amiel

that has captivated me, whether it is the strain of Puritanism I find in it, or the tone of melancholy, or the speculative hunger, or the strange self-distrust and bashfulness of the man, or the atticism and splendor of expression, or what it is. I think most likely that Scherer is right when he says that in these chapters "I find myself." On every page one feels like saying, "That fits me exactly." The author is describing himself and so too us all. I guess the inner life in all of us is pretty much the same.

I presume you know the history of the book and how it came to be. It was in 1849, just as he entered on his professorship at Geneva, that he started it. It is not exactly a diary or journal although that is what he named it. There are leaps of days and sometimes weeks when nothing is recorded. He kept it up for thirty years. It runs to 17,000 folio pages. He records the incidents of each day, his observations, the books he is reading and how they appealed to him. He discusses politics, religion, literature, music, art, science. He gossips about the great men he meets. He never married and the manuscript was a sort of lifelong

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companion to him. He opens his heart in it as to a dear friend. It contains the "confidences and secrets of a solitary thinker." He died in 1881 and the first volume of the book was not published until the year following. No one knew of the existence of such a manuscript until a few months after the author had passed away, when it fell into the hands of his literary heirs. Thus was brought to light another matchless classic of the soul.

It interested me very much too when I read that he was looked upon in life as a disappointment by his friends. They considered him an exceedingly able mind who was capable of bringing out some magnum opus, but all he did was publish a few volumes of poems which never ranked very high, and four or five scattered essays, one on Madame de Staël, one on Rousseau, one on the history of the Geneva College, and one on the literature of French-speaking Switzerland. That was his whole literary output. As his biographer puts it, "We could not understand how it was that a man so gifted produced nothing but trivialities." Mrs. Ward calls it "the sterility of genius."

Amiel

Now I am going to send it to you and I want you to read it, and when you read it I rather think it will be the religious note that will appeal to you. The book is an analysis of the human soul from the view-point of philosophy, but it is just full too of the strain of personal religion. His head at times is far from orthodoxy and yet his heart clings to old traditions. Time and again he declares that religion can never be replaced by philosophy. "The redemption of the intellect is not the redemption of the heart," he says; "it is the part for the whole." And again, "The best test of the profundity of any religious doctrine is its conception of sin. To die unto sin is the highest solution of the inner life."

I think the story of his last illness is one of the bravest and sweetest I have ever come across. He had never been a strong man, and at fifty-three he received from his physician his death warrant. For seven long years he lingered,—dying by inches and knowing it all the while. The journal, however, during all this time never grows morbid. It keeps up its interest in everything. Here is a record

Letters to Edward

written in January (he died in April): "A terrible night. For three or four hours I struggled against suffocation and looked death in the face. It is clear that what awaits me is suffocation. I shall die by choking. I should not have chosen such a death but when there is no option one must simply resign oneself. Spinoza expired in the presence of the doctor whom he had sent for. I must familiarize myself with the idea of dying unexpectedly. My fate lacks beauty, grandeur, poetry. . . . Leibnitz was accompanied to his grave by his servant only. But the great mystery cannot be shared. 'Thy will not mine be done.'"

Ever faithfully yours,

MILCOLUMBUS.

A Country Tea Party

Monday, August 14, 1912.

MY DEAR EDWARD :

I had another rather startling experience to-day. I went to a tea party. I do not suppose you know what a country tea party is. Well, our church here decided last spring that they ought to overhaul and re-decorate the manse for their new minister, but where the necessary \$1,000.00 was to come from caused almost a wavering debate. At last, however, after a long discussion, they resolved upon a tea party to be held some time in midsummer, when the crops would all be in, and the farmers more or less free-footed. This is how they manage it. Forty or fifty of the leading women of the parish go in pairs or trios and agree to take a table. They bake and beg enough food to feed a multitude of about the gospel narrative size, and on the appointed day you find yourself in a large twenty or thirty acre field with tents and booths and drinking fountains and roulette tables and gypsy camps and all sorts of games and gambols—greasy

Letters to Edward

poles, tugs-of-war, merry-go-rounds, some pitching quoits, some putting the shot, some throwing the hammer, some tilting, some swinging, some strolling around with their sweethearts. It is the great festal day of the season. Well, I rode over to the theatre of interest this afternoon. As we approached I could hear the voices clear and jocund on the soft summer air. Everything was bright and vivacious. The bag-pipes were playing, the violins were accompanying the merry dancers. Such crowds and oh, dear, such horrible dust! It seemed as if everybody in this section had gravitated to this thirty-acre field, all sprinkled with buttercups and carpeted with a delicate green, while the daisies were all about in bewildering profusion. I counted more than three hundred horses and carriages tied to the fences along the woods that circumscribed the field. There was a clump of tall poplars on the shoulder of the gentle hill, and it too was black with vehicles of every description. I started to roam round among the booths and watch the people, studying the rustic styles, surveying gestures and glances, when all of a sudden I

A Country Tea Party

caught a glimpse of a face that I felt positive I had seen before.

“ Sometimes our dreams return so real
That we can't but believe them true ;
Sometimes we meet a face familiar
And wonder when and where and who.”

But do what I would I could not place the features. I tried every trick of memory and recall, but nothing seemed to make the vague impression definite. It was not until late in the afternoon when I had ceased trying, and she again burst suddenly on me as I was turning the corner of a spruce spinny that grew in a corner of the pasture, that in a happy flash I remembered our former meeting and stepped up and introduced myself. And this brings me to the beginning of my story.

One Wednesday afternoon last winter I was visited by a young lady in the study of my church. She handed me her card and began by apologizing for the intrusion. Glancing at the card I noticed that she was a medical practitioner. It read Dr. Marion DeWitt Gregory with address and office hours. She was young, not more than twenty-seven or

Letters to Edward

twenty-eight I guessed, and beautifully gowned. She had large Venetian eyes, blue as a corn-flower, and full of warmth and flame. She had an easy charm of manner that I could not refrain from admiring, nor could I well help taking in the dainty marks of her toilette—the knot of rich lace and the solitary crescent that held the lace so carelessly yet artistically together, the ruffle of her wavy auburn hair, the numerous little touches of taste. “I have come, doctor,” she began, “on a strange errand, or rather I find myself strangely disposed. For in the first place I am a complete stranger to you, and yet I might as well be perfectly frank at the outset and tell you that I am what you would call an infidel. I do not believe in anything you preach; I do not believe in creeds or churches; I do not believe in the Bible; I do not believe in prayer; I do not believe in the after-life; I do not believe in Christ; in fact, I think no such man ever lived—and yet I have come to you for help.

“I have a friend who is an artist,” she went on, “and who is living in the same apartment with me. She was educated abroad where she

The Minister and Beggars

met a man who betrayed her. Fortunately her child did not live and her people know nothing at all of her secret misfortune. It was in Paris I met her first. I was attracted to her in her loneliness and saw her through her trouble. In fact, I think I am the only person on this side the water who knows anything of her recent history. Well, I brought her back here to New York and have been practically supporting her all winter, but my income is small and I cannot help her much further. She has been trying hard to make good here in New York, but although her work has received the highest praise, still she is not known and the competition is too keen, and she is discouraged. Now, my object in coming to you is to say that I have secured a position for her in an art school in Denver, my old home, but it will cost \$50.00 to send her out there and I really haven't got that amount to spare, and I wondered if among the rich people of your congregation you could not find some kind-hearted person to advance the price of her ticket. As I intimated already, I am really ashamed to come to you, but this is the

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church nearest to us, and I did not know where else to turn."

Whether it was the evident culture and seeming honesty of my visitor, or her singular attractiveness, or the frank declaration of her religious views that appealed to me, I do not know, but a subconscious feeling kept bobbing up that here was an opportunity to show to an avowed enemy that religion was not the hard, fruitless, heaven-gazing foolishness she thought it was, and maybe to win her over from the ranks, and on the spur of that prompting I took out my check-book and drew my personal check for the amount.

But in the evening as I was relating the incident to my wife, who is gifted with singular intuition and insight, she simply made the comment, "Well, I don't know but I think you were a little *quick*;" so next morning, with my faith a trifle disturbed, I wended my way down to the hotel. Inquiring at the door if Dr. Gregory was in her office I was told that she had not been in since yesterday. Then I asked for Miss Blanchard and was shown to her studio. I found her busy doing some

The Minister Deceived

sketching. I explained to her that I had met Dr. Gregory, had heard her speak of her and her work, but as she made no voluntary advances in regard to the interview of yesterday, I concluded it was because of sensitiveness on the subject. My fears, however, were disabused. I found her quite a sensible and attractive little woman, and after a few moments spent in admiring some of her landscapes, which she very cordially and graciously described, considering me no doubt a possible purchaser, I quietly withdrew, and so the little incident passed quite completely out of memory.

But when I saw her this afternoon, and located mentally the face, and the time and place of our first meeting, then, of course, everything revived, and I said, somewhat abruptly, no doubt: "Excuse me, but are you not Miss Blanchard of New York?"

She said, "I am."

"Well, I am the clergyman that Dr. Gregory came to see about you."

"About me?" she exclaimed rather astonished.

"Yes," I continued; "she said she had

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secured a position for you in an art school in Denver."

"Art school in Denver," she repeated; "why, how long ago? This is the first I have heard of it."

Then when I rehearsed the story I had been told in my study, she was quite overcome with indignation and surprise. "Why," she said, "there is not a grain of truth in it. I have always been able to buy my own ticket anywhere I ever wanted to go. Moreover, I have never been in Paris; in fact, have never been abroad in my life. The tales that this woman has been telling about me are something awful. I am hearing something new every day." Then she went on to explain how she had happened to meet this said Dr. Gregory less than a year ago in a current events class, that they struck up an acquaintance, being both young professional women in a big city, and that, being anxious to economize, they decided to take a small apartment together. "But," she added, "we only kept it for three months, and I am out a good deal more than \$50.00. Yes, you have had your fingers burned in a beautiful

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flame, but so have I—and a good deal worse than yours—to my sorrow.”

“But how comes it,” I turned shunting the disagreeable episode, “how comes it that you are away up here in this out-of-the-way place?”

“Why,” she replied, “this is my home ; this is where I was born ; yonder is where I went to school ; over these wolds I have played as a little girl.”

And with that the light dawned and I then knew for certain that the study tale was of scandalous manufacture. For was I not acquainted with her people and many of her connections, and although I had never met her personally, still I had heard of her and her work more or less. I knew her parents well. They were among the most respected members in the community. The wonder is that when the name was first spoken I did not instantly recognize it, and connect it with my fellow countryman artist, but this can be easily understood too when it is remembered that she had only recently come to New York, and anyway the Paris story naturally threw me off my guard.

Letters to Edward

Dear, dear, what tales we ministers have to listen to. Is it any wonder that after a while we are apt to grow suspicious? I have not lost my faith in human nature but I do hate to be taken in.

But now I have given so much space to the recital of this singular encounter that I fear I have no time left for anything further about the tea party. I can hear the horses' hoofs thudding on the hard gravel road going home. The sparrows are retiring for the night in the gables of the old barn, and seem to be discussing the affairs of the day in a dreadful disorderly jargon. I can hear, too, as I write the shouting of the boys, and the rowdyism in the distance. The show is over and this is the usual sequel to all these events—carousing and skylarking and drunkenness. Half the women in the parish will be down to-morrow with nervous prostration. Dear me, if I had my way, I would banish every fair, every festival, every necktie sociable, every grab-bag, every ring-cake and raffle, every candy pull, every chicken pie dinner, every pink-apron-Martha-Washington supper, every lantern performance, every

The Church's Tainted Money

operatic Christmas fandango to the bottom of Bottomless Bay. The whole business of supporting religion by the sale of gimcracks and all such devices is a disgrace to the Gospel which it professes to proclaim. Not one truthful word can be uttered in its defense. They are wrong, all wrong, always wrong, altogether wrong. I know some people who see no harm in them, but then that only shows the large number of Christians who are yet in the "stone age of spiritual discernment." How can we ever hope to make religion respectable so long as churches make their living by peddling ice-cream and crazy quilts? Imagine Paul selling oysters to pay the expenses of Barnabas and himself on their missionary journeys. Some indeed champion taverns to their congregational equipment. I know one church myself that secured individual communion cups by means of a euchre party. What do you think of that? But I must bring this long rambling letter to a close. Give my love to the little rosebud across the arroyo. And believe me ever faithfully yours,

MILCOLUMBUS.

Letters to Edward

Monday, August 21, 1912.

MY DEAR EDWARD :

I just received your letter and oh, how glad it made me feel. To think that the little sweet heart-rumor is true—how perfectly lovely! And that you are engaged! My dear boy, I could just take you by the neck and give you a good squeeze, and of course it goes without saying that I would like to do the same with her. For she is the sweetest, most attractive, and most unselfish little soul I have ever met—excepting one other. There, now, isn't that nice?

This morning after your sunbeam letter came I was so happy that I went for a walk down through what we call the Glen. It is a beautiful walk of about a mile and a half, winding in and out and round about along the level of a swiftly-running stream. The bank on the opposite side is quite steep and the trees are huge—great oaks and chestnuts and hemlocks—and the trail, interlaced with a perfect network of roots, is bordered on either side with

A Walk in the Woods

laurel and rhododendron. It is so arched and thickly shaded that the place is moist and cool even on the hottest days in summer. Every now and then I would come to an open glade with an old deserted wagon road crossing it, and stop to pick the goldenrod and ferns and blueberries. Then I would plunge into the damp thicket again and stroll leisurely along. The path has a give to it and so is soft and refreshing to the foot. The leaves of the white oak are just beginning to turn, the birds were twittering and the sun was filtering through the branches, and I came to an old rustic seat and sat me down, and noted the different shades of green in pine and balsam and hickory and the wild shrubbery at my side. Then I listened for quite a while to the murmur of the water as it slid and fell and twisted and gurgled over its rocky, and in some places shingly, bed—it was all so poetical. I had you both in mind, and oh, how I wished that you could have been here to enjoy it with me. Then I came to the Falls and walked down the steps, counting them as I descended (one hundred and ninety, I think) to the foot of the drop, and watched

Letters to Edward

for a long while the beautiful curve of the plunge as it slipped over the edge, and the play of the colors, and down below the different eddies with the trout swimming about. And it was all a love parable. The birds were telling love stories to each other; the music of the brook was love music; the smell of the ferns brought me back to my own wedding day; the thrush was singing a love song down yonder on a branch of an old tamarack that was leaning over, and almost dipping into the water, and I could not help repeating Tennyson's little lyric, not because there was any particular appropriateness, but because I guess the joy was in my heart and I was thinking of you.

“Summer is coming, summer is coming;
I know it, I know it, I know it;
Light again, life again, leaf again, love again;
Yes, my wild little poet.”

You say you want me to come out and tie the knot. Why, my dear boy, I will cross the Continent a dozen times to be so honored. But was I ever telling you of one awful experience I had once in knot-tying? Well, you know I am somewhat of a slave to my manuscript, and even the marriage ceremony I could never

A Marriage Ceremony Extempore

memorize. When I started preaching I used to write my sermon on Monday and Tuesday, and then spend the rest of the week committing it; it was awful; four days wasted! Even now I am always thankful when I get safely through the Lord's Prayer on Sunday morning, I am so afraid of getting some of the sentences in the wrong place. The only other memoriter work I try to manage now is the committal service at the grave, as with my eye on the lowering casket I repeat, "Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God, etc.," but I assure you I am always grateful when the end is in sight. I wouldn't dare tackle the Apostles' Creed. Well, the occasion to which I am referring happened about ten years ago. I was to officiate at a wedding. So when the evening came I took down my manual, put it in the inside pocket of my Prince Albert and was driven to the bride's home. When I arrived at my destination I found a considerable company of friends gathered to celebrate the happy occasion. The house was tastily decorated. Everybody seemed bright and cheerful. I took my stand under an archway that had been

Letters to Edward

prettily planned in the oriel window. Soon there began the opening strains of Lohengrin to which the bridal party stepped slowly in. My hands were clasped behind my back with the manual between them. When the music ceased and all was quiet, I opened it to begin my part when lo, horror of horrors, the title my eye caught was "Todhunter's Conic Sections." Well, I grew cold and hot and then cold again. I was simply stiff with fright. I never could recall just what I did say, but it must have been a frightful fizzle. Even now it causes a funny feeling to creep over me when I think about it. However, do not be anxious. That was ten years ago and you need not fear. I have had quite an experience since, and I could make a right passable job of the knot now even without my little text-book. But it is now creeping well on towards midnight and I must stop. Write me all the gossip you may happen to overhear about the corridors. How I would love to be behind a screen at the Ladies' Aid some Wednesday afternoon! And believe me, ever faithfully yours,

MILCOLUMBUS.

A Service in the Old Home Church

Sunday, August 27, 1912.

MY DEAR EDWARD:

Another Sunday evening and I must tell you about my experiences to-day. For I have had several more exciting ones. In the first place I preached; the pastor went away early in the week on a little vacation, and I agreed to take a Sunday or two provided they could secure nobody else. Well, it is always a great event when I hold forth in the old church—I mean a great event for me. For here I was baptized, here I first sat down at the communion table, here I was ordained, here I received most of my early religious instruction outside of what was imparted to me at home, here I preached my first sermon—and my last. And the people drive from far and near to hear the boy, and judge whether he has improved any since they heard him the last time. The Sunday-school is held at ten just before the morning service, and as the teacher of the Bible Class did not show up, they laid another burden on my shoulders. I

Letters to Edward

confess frankly I did not like it any too well, because I am just a little afraid of these old farmers. They are regular theologians, every last one of them, reared on the Shorter Catechism and King James' Version. A man must be pretty sure of himself before he ventures to stand up before them and discuss the Fall of Jerusalem, or the Temple, or the laws of Leviticus. Candidly, I would not think of holding an argument with one of them. And here was a class of twenty-five. And I did not even know what the lesson was about. But I felt relieved on learning that it was in the New Testament, and still more at ease when I glanced at the head-lines and noticed it was in the life of Christ. The passage for our study turned out to be the ninth of John, and of course I apologized at the outset for not having gone over the lesson beforehand, remarking by the way that I had only consented to take the regular teacher's place on condition that it was to be a mutual talk together. But hardly had we fairly started when one of the long-headed elders leveled a broadside at me. "What connection,

Teaching the Bible Class

doctor," he asked, "is there between that fourth verse and the verses preceding and following?" And then the questions flew thick and fast—the Sabbath day! the connection between suffering and sin! the subject of miracles! the foreordination of sorrow! how sin came into the world! would death be if sin were not! What didn't we discuss? What philosophers these yeomen are! One dear old soul came up after the lesson and thanked me, remarking that we had had a "right lively time of it." I confess I was glad to get safe and sound into the pulpit where there could be no talking back, although do you know since then I have been wondering if it would not be a good thing in our church services sometimes, if there were given an opportunity for some back firing. One thing, it would waken us up a bit. The preacher has altogether too much his own way, I fear. There is a whole lot of Popery in our religious traditions, tending as it does to the mediæval heresy that authority is truth. Then for a few minutes I watched the worshippers enter. What a reverent company they are! This old

Letters to Edward

church is a real factor in their lives. It means something to them. All bow in prayer as they are seated; all have their Bibles. When the text is given out you can hear the rustle of the leaves. I love to watch the faces. The young people are all strange to me, but here and there I can distinguish one from a paternal or maternal likeness. And so many of the old forms are missing! I remember when a lad there was a good Highlander in the neighborhood who was a great admirer of John Knox; the mother was as warmly devoted to Luther. Their first child happened to be born on the 10th of July which, I believe, is Calvin's birthday, the result being that they had quite a tussle over the name. For months they could not agree on anything, till at last a compromise was made on Calvin Knox Luther McMillan. The little fellow grew up and we boys nicknamed him the Reformation. And there he was sitting down on the left row with his wife and a big strapping boy between them. Everybody here is nicknamed. The place is full of McLeans and McDonalds and McDougalls and McRaes. There is John McRae and Donald

Meeting Old Friends

McRae and Jim McRae and Angus McRae and Peter McRae and Sandy McRae; there is Simon McLean and Ronald McLean and Neil McLean and Murdoch McLean; there's big Charlie and little Charlie and black Charlie; it seems as if every man one meets is a McRae or McLean or McDonald. Such Johns and James and Hectors and Billies and Donald Johns and John Donalds I never saw the like, and nearly everybody has his nickname; if you speak of Sandy McTavish nobody will know for a moment whom you mean, but if you say big Sandy or black Sandy or red Sandy or curly Sandy, nothing more is needed; the identification is complete. .

But the surprise of the morning was the entering of two strangers just as I began to read the Scripture lesson. They were ushered up to the front seat right under my eye. Who do you suppose they were? Do you remember the two young people I met on the train on my trip to Chicago? I mean the ones that attracted me by their conversation. They had just been attending the Endeavor meeting at Atlantic City. Well, here they were. I rec-

Letters to Edward

ognized them at once. They are spending their vacation over at the hotel on the south shore. We have quite a considerable colony of Americans there in summer. The hotel is about five miles away, and quite a number, I understand, always ride over to church. Well, after the service was over I stepped down and spoke to them. Of course they did not know me from a Canadian thistle. I never let on. But they were most cordial, said if I happened in the neighborhood of the hotel that they would be pleased to have me call, and you can depend on it I am going to too, for I want to meet them. Well, dear me, isn't the world small after all? Think of listening to these two young people on the train discussing theology and writing you about it, and now running across them again away up here in the wilds of Canada! Her name is Miss Johnson, his name is Graham. But I will tell you all about them in my next. So till then and with lots of happy wishes,

Believe me,

Faithfully yours,

MILCOLUMBUS.

Summer Tourists

Thursday, September 7, 1912.

MY DEAR EDWARD :

Well, I have had quite an interesting visit over at the Hill Crest, met my friends again and spent a delightful day there. There are six in the party—Miss Johnson and her mother, Mr. Graham, and a Miss MacDonald with her father and mother. The father is a practicing physician in Detroit. As I entered, Miss Johnson was in the music room at the piano. She was rendering Mendelssohn's "Gondellied." I sent up my card, as I did not wish to commit any solecism of etiquette, and while waiting I enjoyed the music. I felt myself being rowed over the dark waters of the canal under the moonlight, past arches and palaces and towers with their rich gildings and mouldings and traceried windows. I could hear the cry of the gondolier and then the deep tones of the bell ringing out clear and strong over the waters. She is a beautiful player. When she had finished she stood up between the stool and instrument, and gathering the

Letters to Edward

sheets together and without looking round, "Ruth," she called. Ruth, it seemed, was in an alcove not far away, reading. Then arm in arm they walked out on the porch. Meanwhile Mrs. Johnson came down in answer to my card and we all sat down on the verandah together. "We enjoyed your sermon so much yesterday, doctor," Miss Johnson began. "Oh, thank you," I said. "I was quite startled to see you walk in. You did not know that we had met before, did you?"

"Why, no," she added somewhat surprised. "Where?" And then I related the incident. Well, you should have seen the funny look she gave me. Nothing would do but she must hunt up Graham who was about the hotel somewhere, and that I should wait and lunch with them. Well, I can assure you I was glad I waited. At lunch we had a table all to ourselves over in a corner, and we talked as though we had been friends of long standing. They are certainly most charming people. And the girls are two of the brightest conversationalists I have ever run across. I have already given you a sample of one, and the other is fully as

The Candidating Peril

good and very much like her. I tell you, my boy, if things do not go along well across the arroyo, there is some fine fishing in this stream. All are college graduates and good church people too. Graham is in the Episcopal Seminary at Philadelphia, and is a cousin of Miss Johnson, I understand. In fact, I think they are all cousins more or less remote, but I have not got that far along into the intricacies of family ties as yet. Dr. MacDonald is evidently one of the principal men in his home church in Detroit, the Tabernacle Presbyterian.

“You don’t know any smart young fellow we could get for our pulpit, I suppose, doctor,” he said to me at the table.

“You should tell the doctor,” Miss MacDonald added, “that we have been three years without a pastor, and that in that time we have heard something like forty candidates, papa.”

“Well now, Ruth, I do not think it is altogether fair to give the doctor such a dreadful impression of us as all that,” the mother interposed.

“Well, mama, it’s true anyway. Forty-two, I think, is the exact number, doctor, and they

Letters to Edward

have been all sorts and conditions. We have had old men and young men, big men and little men, men who wore glasses and one or two who wore gowns, some who parted their hair in the middle and some who did not have any to part. Certainly if variety is charming we have been charmed. Then we have had all styles of preaching—memoriter, extempore, topical, textual; some read their sermons so closely that they scarcely lifted their eye off the paper, a few in fact following the lines with their fingers. Now I never did like a read sermon. I do not know whether the doctor reads his or not. (I did not have the pleasure of being present yesterday, doctor.) I never listen to a read sermon that I do not feel in my bones the truth of a remark I once heard, that if that man instead of trying to put fire on paper—if he would just take that paper and use it to kindle a fire in his own heart, he would be more likely to succeed, as the old hymn puts it, in ‘kindling one in these cold hearts of ours.’ Indeed I often think of the story told of Thomas Blacklock, the famous blind preacher. It was when he was presented to the parish of

Our Theological Schools

Kirkcudbright by the Earl of Selkirk. An old lady sitting on the pulpit stairs inquired of the one sitting next her if she thought he was a reader. 'He canna be a reader for he is blind,' was the reply. 'I'm glad on't,' said the old lady smiling. 'I wish they were a' blind.'"

"She certainly is hitting you pretty hard, doctor," Miss Johnson interrupted, "for if I am not mistaken you use the manuscript."

"Oh, mother," she returned with splendid recovery, "New York doctors are not that easily shocked. Maybe I am a little hard but then, doctor, I always speak my mind you see. We have been three years in our church, I say, looking for a pastor, sampling applicants most of the time, and such a lot of old fogies as most of them are. I get so out of patience sometimes with our divinity schools—the material they are sending out to us as spiritual leaders."

"Now it's your turn, Walter," Miss Johnson broke in again, glancing across the table at Graham.

"What is a theological seminary for, I would

Letters to Edward

like to know," she went on, taking no notice of the interruption, "what is a theological seminary for if not to turn out preachers? I don't believe a theological seminary is for manufacturing scholars. We have scholars enough. The Church is sinking with the weight of her scholarship. Scholarship alone will never bring the world to Christ. What we want is men who can preach, and when a man can preach he has no right, it seems to me, taking a college chair. The Church should not permit it. Look at the field to-day. There's Dr. Van Dyke and Dr. Hyde and Dr. McPherson and Dr. Thwing and Dr. Stryker and Dr. Faunce and Dr. McAfee and a great long list of doctors this and that. What right have these men to be filling college chairs—running around the country begging for money, which, by the way, seems to be the principal work of a college president nowadays—when the Church is crying out so loudly and urgently for men to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ? Some ministers can sing a little, paint a little, play the piano a little, dabble in old china a little, and do a little of most anything.

Preachers Who Can Preach

I think they are betraying their calling. They were not sent to do a whole legion of little things but one all-absorbing great thing.

“Now, for instance, take the man we had a week ago. He preached on the Atonement and as far as any heart-appeal is concerned, he might just as well have been reciting the dimensions of Solomon’s Temple. Now preaching, as I understand it, is talking to people’s hearts, and the Atonement is certainly a most tender subject, yet the man never once gripped us at close range. I would not call it preaching at all ; it was just lecturing.

“Doctor,” she went on, turning to me, “I think the great thing preachers ought to aim at to-day is to be interesting ; first of all to be spiritual and then to be interesting. The little codger who spent the day fishing and did not even get a bite gave a first rate explanation of his hard luck when he said, ‘We didn’t seem to catch their attention.’ And churches to-day have not won the world’s attention. Why, in most city churches the choir is gradually squeezing out the preacher, will only graciously allow him twenty or twenty-five minutes now,

Letters to Edward

and if the craze continues, by and by the sermon will be pushed out the back door altogether. Then, I presume, the good old command will be changed so as to read, 'Go and sing the Gospel to every creature.' Doctor, dullness in the pulpit is an unpardonable sin, and yet, shall I confess it, nine sermons out of every ten to me are dull."

"Maybe it's your own fault," interrupted Miss Johnson.

"Well, maybe it is, but I happen to know a professor in one of our leading seminaries and his chair is homiletics, which is, being interpreted, I believe, how to preach. Isn't that correct, doctor? Well, this same teacher of the art and science of preaching started with a great overflowing congregation himself in his last pastorate, and swept the building empty in two years, and now, mark, he is giving lectures to the rising theologues on how to reach the masses. By the way, he occupied our pulpit one Sunday last winter, taking for his text that beautiful heart-reaching invitation, 'Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.' Now if there is a text in

Interesting Without Being Sensational

the whole Bible that a man ought to be simple upon (thought I to my lone self as he started out) surely this is the text ; but as he proceeded it seemed as if he was transformed into the very genius of darkness. On and up he soared into the fog, above earth and cloud and human creature. After forty minutes or so he came down because he was tired, I presume—and so were we. But then I would rather preach like that than like some others—like the pulpit buffoon for instance. I was in Boston two weeks ago. I was reading the afternoon paper wondering where I would go to church to-morrow ; it was Saturday. Glancing at the religious page I was looking who were to be the preachers. One of the notices caught my eye. It read thus, ‘Morning Subject, God’s Pocket Handkerchief ; Evening Subject, The Funeral of Adam.’ Now do you wonder that people do not attend public worship as once they did ? And yet all the while the simple story of Jesus is the most interesting, the most thrilling narrative ever dramatized by the pen of man. I declare, doctor, I think we need a revival nowadays to restore an evangelical ac-

Letters to Edward

cent to present-day preaching, and bring back the good old times."

Well, my dear boy, I have given you a little sample of the atmosphere I have been in to-day. The only regret I had was that I could not take down everything that was said as before, for my memory is bad and broken and as I write I cannot fill in some of the gaps. But it was all just as clever and spicy as could be. Miss MacDonald interested me most because she is the prettier and more outspoken, but they are both very attractive and both are unusual talkers. Graham is quiet, but clever too; I liked him exceedingly. Even the observations of the old people would be well worth reporting if I could only remember and give them in their proper settings. Then, too, one cannot convey the tone, the look, the laugh, the glance, the gesture. I believe I would even make a conversationalist myself if I lived in a circle like that every day. It is a great and wonderful and much neglected art. As it is, I am a poor talker. My preference is to sit quietly in a corner and listen. In society my wife calls me a stick. But the fact is, as I go

The Neglected Art of Conversation

out into society I cannot bring myself to enthuse over the small talk I hear ; it bores me ; there is so little to it. This talking just for the sake of saying something and filling in the interstices of silence seems such an empty task. But my letter has grown to an inordinate length and I must stop. We played a foursome in the afternoon and I did not get back home until almost seven o'clock. But I have had a red-letter day and enjoyed every minute of it. Both girls are graduates of Vassar. Both too have taken a special course in philosophy at Chicago University, and Miss Johnson spent another year in the Biblical Institute. I declare few ministers are better posted in theology. They invited me next week to another golf tournament and I am counting on it greatly. Only I am not sleeping a bit well and it gives me such a draggy feeling. But maybe it will wear off ; only it disturbs me not to be gaining ground when I am doing nothing, and ought to be laying up an extra store of energy against the winter. Good-bye for the present and believe me faithfully yours,

MILCOLUMBUS. . .

Letters to Edward

September 12, 1912.

MY DEAR EDWARD :

I have been dreadfully distressed ever since hearing that you have had a slight return of the old trouble. I am so afraid you have been working too hard, but the parish is so large that I suppose you felt you had to put in some extra hours. I know you are something like myself, in that work that ought to be done worries you until you see that it is done, and maybe this very worry is as harmful as the over-work, and then too there is such a sweet and complacent feeling in knowing that the day's tasks are all finished, the chores all attended to, and everything tucked away nicely for the night. One sleeps better. And what would I not give sometimes for that! I am such a wretched sleeper! The least obstruction seems to throw me off the rails. I am so sensitive to changes—a strange room, a different mattress, a new suit of pajamas, a pillow too low or too high, the least little swerving from the old ruts and it's all up with me for the night. Then if

Insomnia

I lose one night I am almost certain to lose two, and when the third comes I've got so far beyond sleep that it seems as if every nerve in my body were wide awake, and only a little veronal or some coal tar product will suffice to call me back to relaxation and calmness and the old ways. I stupefy, as it were, the rebellious spirit and knock it into the groove again. The great foe of sleeplessness is fear. What an obstinate thing it is! I consider fear to be the great enemy of the human mind, greater than superstition, greater than ignorance. What a long black wake of woe it has left behind it. Often when I start to retire I am so dull and heavy I can hardly keep my eyes open till I am disrobed, then the moment I strike the pillow along comes this bogie to obsess me with the thought that maybe I am in for another wakeful night, and lo, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, I am alert and all attention again.

But then my trouble is a small matter compared to some others, and I find that the ailment is surprisingly common. I never knew there were so many insomniacs among my

Letters to Edward

friends until two or three years ago when I first began to sip a little of the bitter potion myself. On every side I was given prescriptions and recommendations by some healed exponent of his certain cure. I received letters almost daily, saying something to this effect, "Dear brother, I can sympathize with you and I do." Each day brought some fresh and friendly surprise from martyrs to the wakeful art. Ah, the old world is not so cold and heartless as we think. People do not advertise their ills and aches as much as we are sometimes apt to imagine. Many, of course, there are who love to talk their trials and feast on each affliction, but the great majority carry their cross quietly and patiently and alone. These heroes and heroines of uncomplaining silence are all about us, and many of them are as true and brave soldiers as ever fell on any battle-field. I called to-day on one of the old friends of my boyhood who is very ill. He was too ill to see me. Poor fellow, what a hard, rough road he has had to travel! He is a young lawyer. Four years ago when he was first stricken down I visited him and prayed with

A Hero and a Heroine

him. I prayed that he might be spared to his dear wife and little family because they needed him so. "Oh," he said when I had finished and with tears in his eyes, "you do not understand; I do not want to live; there is nothing in life for me any more; I want to go." At the time of that attack he was almost a year from his office, most of it spent in suffering. But he grew some better and for two years he was able to go to his desk for two or three hours a day. Yesterday I heard he was down and out again for the tenth or eleventh time, same trouble, only worse. How grieved I was to hear it! How I hated to go! How I dreaded the interview! He asks so many questions. He thinks that because I am a minister I know a little more about the ways of Providence. He wonders why. He wants the mystery explained. And one feels so keenly one's ignorance! He is a most earnest fellow. He has a strong religious bent. He never murmurs, never really doubts, but hope has been deceived so often. One day all seems bright, the next brings cloud and shadow. It has been ups and downs for the past five years, like a

Letters to Edward

cat playing with a mouse. I called to see him but, as I said, he was too weak to receive me, so I sat and talked for an hour with his true, brave, patient little wife. "And through it all," she remarked, "we have been so happy." I offered her money. I said, "Your expenses are heavy; it has been doctors and nurses and medicines for five years now; your income is not large; you must need many things. Please accept this; I want to do something for you." But she thanked me so sweetly and said, "No, doctor, we can manage, I think." Oh, the mystery of suffering, the riddle, the puzzle! How it baffles us! How it tears our heart-strings!

Yesterday after dinner I went down to the shore to get some exercise in the shape of a run along the sand, but the tide was high and the beach, close in, is very rocky and stony, so I struck out across the heath and kept on winding over the hill. It was a perfect evening with the sun sinking in a bed of amber. The hay was all gathered, and I crossed the country past moor and fen and furrow and ripening wheat fields, jumping fences and brooks and

In the Old Burial Ground

morasses till I came to a copse of bird's eye maple. I plunged into it without a path to guide me and not knowing whither I was going. When I got out into the clearing I was puzzled for a moment to know just where I was, but looking about I saw the church spire and cemetery only a few rods away on the crest of a hill, with a dingle and thick underbrush between us. So I shot across by the shortest cut and soon found myself in the old burial ground, "where heaves the turf in many a mouldering heap." Here lie my forefathers and, indeed, all my departed kindred. What a holy, peaceful spot it is! Beautiful for situation but shamefully kept! The grass is growing on the walks. Rank weeds and tall timothy abound on every side. The stones, many of them, are leaning over in a state of disintegration and collapse. Strange, isn't it, that people can become so thoughtless as to neglect their dead. Glancing around I noticed a woman kneeling on a grave down near the gateway. Coming closer I found that she was trimming the family plot, and planting a little bed of pansies on her husband's grave. And as she

Letters to Edward

worked she told me her story. I noticed there were five mounds. "This is my dear man's grave," she began; "he left me just a year ago, and that is my precious boy Lloyd's; he died in Hot Springs, Arkansas, and I never even knew that he was sick until I received the telegram of his death; and the next to it is Harry's, the best boy that ever lived; only twenty-three when he was taken," and so she went on describing each little lowly bed and which of her children slept therein, describing in detail their virtues, and all the while sobbing and watering the pansies with her tears. She was now alone, her only relative being a brother who lives in Montreal. She spent this last winter with him, but as she put it when I bade her good-evening, "I'll never go so far from my dear ones again. I want to be near this place; this is the sweetest spot on earth to me." And as I wended my way back and went right by her little cottage door I thought of her living in it all by herself. Five years ago and there was a happy circle of six, now she alone is left and she no longer calls it home. Home is where the heart is and her

Ian McLaren's Confession

heart is up yonder on the hill. And do you know, Edward, the thought that possessed me all the way was what a great and glorious message we have for those that mourn. Hope is the only thing left to the poor soul ; it is her one sustaining prop. She confidently expects to see the circle completed again. Who would rob her of that strengthening inheritance ? I think we do not preach enough the gospel of comfort. Wasn't it Ian McLaren who said on giving up his pastorate in Liverpool that if he were beginning his ministry again he would preach more along the line of the Master's first discourse—"binding the broken-hearted" ? But here again I am becoming long-winded and must put on the brakes. Hope your next letter will bring good news. And with much love, believe me,

Ever faithfully yours,

MILCOLUMBUS.

Letters to Edward

October 5, 1912.

MY DEAR EDWARD :

Well, here I am at Muldoon's. I wonder if you ever heard of the place or the man. I do not suppose you are enough of a sport to know much of his history. Anyway, you have heard of John L. Sullivan, have you not? Well, Muldoon was Sullivan's trainer in the latter's palmy days, and a champion fighter himself in his prime. I had been sleeping so wretchedly that one morning my brother said to me, "Why don't you go to Muldoon's for a few weeks?" The suggestion appealed so strongly that next day I went down and purchased a ticket for White Plains, and the third day saw me on the way.

The farm, as he calls it, is about twenty miles outside of New York and contains some forty or fifty acres, I should say. It occupies the shoulder of a hill that runs for a mile or two along a ridge with quite a considerable slope to north and south. On the crest of the hill are the buildings. These consist of one long rec-

A Visit to Muldoon's

tangular structure of two stories, and the stables which are situated in a slight depression of the crest about two hundred yards away. One end of the main building the professor uses himself as his own private apartments ; the other wing is a library and lounging room for the guests, while in between are the gymnasium on the first floor and the bedrooms on the second. He can accommodate about thirty. I think there are twenty-four here at present.

Well, it certainly is a new experience for me. I have been my own boss for so many years that it went a little hard at first to be ordered around like a barefoot boy in pantaloons, but that is what one is. When a man enters this institution I tell you he leaves his independence behind him. He is not supposed to have a will of his own at all ; it belongs absolutely to another. If I want to run over to White Plains some afternoon for an hour (two miles away) I have to go to headquarters and say, "Please, professor, can I go over to White Plains this afternoon ?" Now, that looks real ridiculous, doesn't it ? And what a tyrant he is ! I can assure you there is no love wasted

Letters to Edward

around this establishment. The whole place is ruled by fear, and the chief instruments towards that end are a loud cross voice, a body as strong and perfect as Angelo's David, muscles like bars of steel and a tirade of profanity. At six in the morning the assistant walks along the corridor and raps at each door to awaken the sleepers and order them to training quarters. So down to the dressing-room we all hurry in our bath robes. There we are told to don our gymnasium suits. There are no chairs in the room, and no one is permitted to sit or squat or even kneel when putting on his shoes and stockings. The place is dimly lighted and the lacing of our gymnasium slippers with their little eyelets is a task that makes the corpulent fellow strain and pant like a horse with the heaves. It is much like threading a needle by dim candle-light. We are allowed so many minutes for this preliminary work and woe betide the fumbler who is not ready when the time is called, for everything here goes by the clock. Then sheep-like we are driven out into the arena. There we are lined up in pairs on either side of the large room. The professor himself always

In the Gymnasium

takes the new man, and as I chanced to be the culprit three weeks ago to-morrow morning, I was taken on for an hour's set-to with the medicine ball. He called out, "Are you ready?" I meekly returned in faltering voice, "I'm ready, professor." Now I had never seen a medicine ball before, nor have I ever seen a stone hurled from a catapult nor a shell leaping in murderous glee from a thirteen inch gun, but I can see that ball still as it approached me on its first passage across the void. It struck me somewhere in the abdominal zone and bounded to the other end of the room. Instantly I heard in stentorian voice, "You —— clown, what are those —— hands of yours for?" And again in raucous tones above the turmoil of the other players, "Throw it from where you are; not that way; overhead, man, overhead; now get back to your place, you wooden idiot; hurry up, man; get a move on you; now why did you do that? Blankety blank! Can't you throw a ball straight? You poor miserable blank nincompoop; all the brains you have are in your boots."

And so it went. This is the accompaniment

Letters to Edward

to which we dance around the room for one long hour. No other voice is heard. No one dares answer back. If some rash fellow were to venture on such a hazardous proceeding he would, no doubt, receive wisdom in a memorable way. For here is no mercy; here is no tenderness; here is no favoritism; here all are alike; here millionaire and senator and judge and actor and preacher are all on the same footing. Elihu Root left a few days before I came and I understand he was leveled with the rest of the men. When his turn came to get under the shower bath, it was not "Mr. Root next," but just "Root next." The professor does not know as yet that I am a preacher, and I do not propose to enlighten him, but I am told that the cloth has not the slightest influence on his vocabulary, save to make it bluer and more livid than ever, if that were possible. When the hour is up the survivors, breathless and spent, drag their weary limbs into the shower room.

At ten o'clock we are ordered to the equerry to saddle our horses, and as most of the men have had little or no experience in the stirrups,

In the Stirrups

the straddle and horsemanship are quite amusing. A few, of course, are experts and can perform equestrian feats, but most of the men are not rough riders, and as the horses are all frisky thoroughbreds and seem to understand that they are out for a caper, and that their riders are not cavaliers, the dance and pranks they lead them are worthy of a hippodrome. Down the lane the cavalcade passes with the professor himself setting the pace. The run begins with a slow rough trot in which the rider is supposed to sit heavy and sore in his saddle, then follows a canter for another five miles, while the last five is covered in a gallop. Some of the hills of Westchester County are very long and some quite steep, and you are usually ordered to dismount at the bottom of one of these grades, and lead your horse up the half-mile incline. I have rarely attempted a more perspiring experiment, for you are supposed to keep up with the leader who, himself in the saddle, jogs on at a slow trot, and what with a nervous stallion rearing and prancing behind and every now and then stepping on your heels if you are not careful, and pushing you into the

Letters to Edward

gully, it is not a Cambridge constitutional by any means. Once we were taken out twelve miles into the country, told to dismount, our horses handed over to some of his men who were there awaiting our arrival. "Now," said the professor, "you can all foot it home; you have just two hours till dinner; I will look for you at the dinner-table." And we all showed up, too. All answered to their names. For he was there to give us his gruff welcome and to see that none of the pilgrims were missing.

Well, Edward, I could go on in this rambling way for a long time but I must not weary you. Sometimes I get so angry at the old man that I feel like challenging him out into the open, only my better judgment tells me there would be little left of me after the bout, but then again I can see his idea through it all. His policy, as I intimated already, is that of fear. The men who come here are mostly nervous wrecks, hypochondriacs and introspectives, men who have nothing much the matter with them. His aim is to get them out of themselves. And love will not do that, sympathy will not do it, kindness will not do it, encouragement will not do

The Power of Fear

it ; nothing will do it but in some way to knock terror into them through his own strong, commanding, domineering, intimidating personality. I have almost made up my mind to preach more about hell henceforward. Because it would seem as if there were some people that need the lash to bring them into the kingdom. Of course the old theologians emphasized it overmuch but we have swung to the other extreme and I think we have lost in so doing. I see that Fagan in his recent book, "The Autobiography of an Individualist," says that fear is a moral and educative force. It is, he claims, of the greatest economic and spiritual value. "Perfect love casteth out fear," the good book says, but it is perfect love ; the Apostle puts the emphasis on the first word. It is fear that prevents love from being perfect. As one's love increases his fear diminishes. But we are such imperfect creatures that fear has its ethical significance. As Muldoon himself puts it characteristically, "You fellows' bodies are all right ; it's your minds that are out of whack." So all are afraid of him ; all cower in his presence—and he knows it. When he is out of

Letters to Edward

hearing strong criticisms are heard, but in his presence the meekness is amusing. His whole philosophy is to put his men on short rations and work them until they are tired. His treatment is massage pure and simple only you do your own massaging. And it produces results ; no doubt about it. We all eat too much and exercise too little.

I am sleeping already like a top. Sometimes in the evening I am so dead weary that I almost keel over while undressing. And in the morning when that knock is heard on the door—oh, for another half hour ! So I am not going to be hard on the old man, not even on his profanity, much as it grates on me. I am convinced that it is simply habitual. And I doubt too if he is hard at heart. Contrariwise, indeed, I would not be a bit surprised to learn that he is tender-hearted, and that his whole bearing is acquired. I should like to see him with a little child. I am not sure that he would not fondle and caress the little thing. But if you know of any poor fellows who have gone to pieces nervously, just tell them there is a place where they can be lifted into the lap of Mor-

The Strenuous Life

pheus in less than a week, and thereafter regularly every night, and without any morphine either. It is a great place for actors. I think half the men here at present are broken-down actors. No liquors of any kind are allowed. The men are permitted one cigar daily, but only one. Of course that does not worry me. I am finishing up my third week and I expect to leave to-morrow. I am certainly in fighting form and feel fit for a fine winter's work. I only wish that you were as well. You poor boy, I am really worried over you. I would advise Muldoon's, only I know it is too strenuous. Why not go out on the desert for a few weeks and try a camping trip? Get two or three nice young fellows; there is Watkins and Andrews, for instance; I know they would be glad to go along. But it is now five minutes of nine and I must close. You see all the lights are put out at nine and everybody is sent to bed. Half the men are off already. Some are so tired that they go right after supper. So good-night. And with much love believe me faithfully yours,

MILCOLUMBUS.

Letters to Edward

October 10, 1912.

MY DEAR EDWARD:

Well, here I am in the old study again, and getting things arranged for another winter's work. My congregation will not be back for a month or two yet, so that I will be dependent for an audience largely on the stranger. Goodness knows there are enough of this class hereabouts any Sunday, if one could only turn their steps Zionward. As it is I fear that most of them sleep or go sightseeing. Really, Edward, New York churches only have their own people about four months in the year.

I never have my mail forwarded on vacations, and you ought to see the pile of stuff that lies before me on the desk. It looks right formidable. The secretary and I have been all morning opening the letters and answering them and we are only about a third through, and fully half of these are begging letters. I have the—well, the good fortune shall I say?—to have in my church a very estimable and rich lady who is known the world over for her

A Rich Philanthropist

philanthropy. She is the best friend that our church has, and no one could be kinder or lovelier to me personally, but everybody seems to think that I am her financial adviser, and so they write asking if I will not act as intercessor for their pet schemes. I pay no attention to them, of course, but you ought to read some of the appeals. Some pretty nearly make us cry and some make us laugh. Really, some are too absurd for anything. You would not suppose there were so many fools in the world. We have opened twenty-three of these epistles already. One is from a man up in Canada who hopes I will take pity on him because I am a Canadian. Another is from a woman out in California who wants to endow a theatre there. She says she has been to hear you preach several times and volunteers the information that you are "just lovely." I have half a notion to mail you some of the appeals only I know you have not the time to read them.

They all seem to think that I have the whole say in the disposition of enormous sums of money, or at any rate that my word and rec-

Letters to Edward

ommendation are law. If they knew that I have never asked anybody for a dollar, and never mean to if I can possibly help it, they would save themselves a deal of trouble. My desire is to protect my parishioners, not to worry them. Goodness knows, they have worries enough without their pastor adding to them. I really think, Edward, if I had one hundred million dollars it would drive me crazy. I learned a good lesson from a story they tell of my predecessor here. The trustees of a certain college in which he happened to be interested were trying to raise an endowment, so he was commissioned to approach a certain wealthy lady in the congregation for a gift of quite considerable dimensions. He had never done anything of the kind before, and although it went against the grain, still the urgency was so great that he decided for just this once to break the precedent he had established. She was then at her country home, and thither the doctor and his good wife went one afternoon in fear and trembling to present the appeal. She saw them coming up the walk and hastened to the door to greet them. "Oh," she exclaimed,

Begging Letters

“I’m so glad to see some one who is not looking for money. I’ve had fifteen beggars to-day already. I’m so glad to see my minister.” Of course that put a quietus to the little speech he had prepared.

But I must halt, as I have such a mass of work before me. The worst of these vacations is the getting into harness again, and making it feel comfortable. The daily “doing nothing” becomes a habit, and my, what tyrants these habits of ours are! Guess I’m naturally lazy. It is now Thursday morning and I have not the remotest idea what to preach on Sunday. Fortunately I have but one service. I think I shall have to go back to the barrel because I am one of those who simply cannot write a sermon in two days. It usually means more like two weeks. I see that Jefferson in his book, “The Building of the Church,” claims that after a few years’ experience a pastor ought to be able to write a sermon in a morning, and thus save himself several days each week for other studies. This would never in the world suit me. With me my whole work is my sermon. It evolves itself by a sort of

Letters to Edward

secret gestation. I usually have from six to ten texts soaking in my mind at once. Then everything becomes tributary to some one of them. Then I write it and rewrite it and sometimes re-rewrite it, and I am usually adding and subtracting and patching and polishing till the very last moment. I hardly ever preach a sermon till I feel it is as good as I, with my little one talent, can possibly make it. The idea of writing a sermon in a morning, and then going to some other reading, would be entirely unworkable in my case. I save my early mornings, and my evenings that are disengaged, for a regular course of general reading. Then I am always glad for stormy weather because it leaves me the whole day with my books. But from nine to twelve every morning I am pegging away religiously at Sunday's sermons. So I must hurry and get to work. I am afraid you will not be able to read this scrawl but my pen is simply atrocious. Doesn't a cantankerous pen annoy you? Good-bye and believe me ever faithfully,

MILCOLUMBUS.

What's Wrong With the Music?

October 15, 1912.

MY DEAR EDWARD:

I have just got back from morning worship and as we have no evening service this month, I am going to fill in the afternoon with a little chat with you. To-night I think I will go down and hear Parker. Everything passed off fairly well this morning except the music. We did not have such a bad turn out considering that it is so early in the season. To be sure the auditorium was not densely packed, but then we are never troubled much with that sort of specific gravity at our corner. I preached on "Oh, how I love Thy law ; it is my meditation all the day," and I tried to encourage a deeper and more systematic study of the Word as being the only way to learn and love it.

But you know the music did not suit me ; we are having such trouble with our organ. The pieces were classical and well rendered and all that, for we have a grand choir, one of the very best in the city (indeed, I think the best),

Letters to Edward

but the selections were unfortunate. They were not appropriate. Two of them had to be changed the last moment on account of the organ going wrong. Out West the biggest trouble I used to have with the singers was trying to get them to sing devotional music. They seemed to think that as they were professionals they must give us something ornate, so that the whole effect was apt to be cold and critical. I am glad to be able to say that that is not the case here. It is a perfect delight to work with my choir. They are all professing Christians, and earnestly so.

Really, Edward, I think half our churches to-day are going music-mad. It takes a lot of pulpit grace sometimes to bear up under what we hear in the choir loft. Sometimes it takes the preacher five or ten minutes to overcome the ill effects of the solo rendered just before the sermon. Last Sunday evening for instance, I went down to hear Gordon. For their offertory selection they had a tenor recitative from Hayden's "Creation." And the rendering of it was a triumph of vocal skill, for the man certainly has a splendid voice,

Classical Music

and the piece is a beautiful thing in its place, only its place is in some music hall where the whole oratorio can be rendered, instead of having a bar or two wrenched from its setting and given while the offering is being taken. Think of getting up and trying to preach on "The love of Christ constraineth us" after such words as these:

"And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after its kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth, after his kind.

"Straight responding to the call
The earth obeyed the word,
And teemed creatures numberless,
In perfect forms and fully grown.
Cheerful, roaring, stands the tawny lion. With
sudden leap
The flexible tiger appears. The nimble stag
Bears up his branching head. With flying
mane,
And fiery look, impatient neighs the noble
steed.
The cattle in herds already seek their food
On fields and meadows green.
And o'er the ground, as plants, are spread
The fleecy, meek, and bleating flocks;
Unnumbered as the sands, in swarms arose
The hosts of insects. In long dimension
Creeps, with sinuous trace, the worm.

Letters to Edward

“ Now heaven in fullest glory shone ;
Earth smiled in all her rich attire ;
The room of air with fowl is filled.
The water swell'd by shoals of fish ;
By heavy beasts the ground is trod ;
But all the work was not complete ;
They wanted yet that wondrous being,
That, grateful, should God's power admire,
With heart and voice His goodness praise.”

Now wasn't that a regular menagerie of a piece, and it took just exactly fifteen minutes to sing it. Why, I felt as if I were walking through Bronx Park. “Tawny lion,” “flexible tiger,” “nimble stag,” “neighing steed,” “fleecy flocks,” “sinuous worm,” “shoals of fish.” I can hear the roar of that shaggy lion still. Oh, I long sometimes for some of the good old standbys, “I need Thee every hour,” “Jesus Lover of my soul,” “Rock of Ages,” “What a Friend we have in Jesus,” and not set to some newfangled air either, but just the gospel tunes that our mothers taught us when we were tots. I tell you it is what the people want ; it is what they like, and it does them good. I dislike rag-time as much as anybody. I think with our President that the “Beautiful Isle of Somewhere” is silly, but then I am not

The Paid Quartette

talking about that; that again is the other extreme.

The trouble, Edward, you see, is that the singers in our metropolitan choirs are not as a rule professing Christians. Ours are, and it is a perfect joy to see them join with us and take the sacrament on communion Sundays. But Dr. —— tells me that in his church, which is one of the largest and most influential churches in Brooklyn, of the four members of his quartette not one is a member of any denomination. The soprano is a Roman Catholic, the alto is a theosophist, the bass is an agnostic, and the tenor is nibbling at Christian Science. Now, isn't that a mix-up? Really, I sometimes feel, especially when I am told of such a condition as this, that the Church would be advantaged and blessed if she were to do away with her paid quartettes entirely, and return to the old precentor style and have a ringing joyful noise from the congregation. As it goes, half the people in our congregations do not sing even the hymns any more. They seem to have lost their voices through atrophy and neglect.

Henry Ward Beecher once preached a sermon

Letters to Edward

on the mission of music in the Church. I wish every choir might read it. Here is an extract.

“Singing is that natural method by which thoughts are reduced to feeling, more easily, more surely, and more universally than by any other. You are conscious when you go to an earnest meeting, for instance, that, while hymns are being sung and you listen to them, your heart is, as it were, loosened, and there comes out of those hymns to you a realization of the truth such as you never had before. There is a pleading element, there is a sense of humiliation of heart, there is a poignant realization of sin and its guiltiness, there is a yearning for a brighter life in a hymn which you do not find in your closet ; and, in singing, you come in sympathy with the truth as you perhaps never do under the preaching of a discourse. There is a provision made in singing for the development of almost every phase of Christian experience. Singing has also a wonderful effect upon those feelings which we wish to restrain. All are not alike susceptible, but all are susceptible to some extent. I speak with emphasis on this point, because I am particularly sensitive to singing, and because I owe so much to it. How many times have I come into the church on Sunday morning jaded and somewhat desponding, saddened at any rate, and before the organ voluntary was completed, undergone a change as great as though I had been taken out of January and been plumped down into the middle of May,

Beecher On Church Music

with spring blossoms on every hand! How many, many times I have been lifted out of a depressed state of mind into a cheerful mood by the singing before I began to preach! How often in looking forward to the Friday night meeting has my prevailing thought been, not of what I was going to say, but of the hymns that would be sung! My prayer-meeting consists largely of the singing of hymns which are full of prayings, and my predominant thought in connection with our Friday night gatherings is, 'Oh, that sweet, joyful singing!'"

Well, to-night I am going down to hear Parker. Last Sunday evening, as I said, I heard Gordon and I enjoyed him greatly. Gordon is one of the strong pulpit forces on Manhattan Island. He is the peer of any one of our coming young men. He has a big commanding presence and a still bigger heart. The clasp of his hand is as stimulating as a bottle of wine. It does one good just to receive his greeting. His sermon was a call to *do* something. "For a quarter of a century," he said, "conferences and congresses and public meetings have been in vogue; the multiplication of meetings has become a weariness to the flesh. There has grown up a savage lust for talk. If

Letters to Edward

a church becomes spiritually low the members salve their consciences by saying, 'Let us hold a conference and discuss the matter ;' or they say, 'Let us arrange for a banquet and have some after dinner speakers to inspire us.' It is not more talk the Church needs or more meetings, but more definite concrete work. I am not sure indeed that this ceaseless round of meetings with their star speakers and advertisements is not injuring the higher life of the kingdom. If each one of you would go out this week and bring one little boy or girl into the Sunday-school, and take a personal oversight of the child, you would be *doing* something ; that is certainly what our church here needs. We are not suffering from a dearth of talkers ; what we want is a crop of workers."

Well, the whole discourse was rich in food. He touched, I firmly believe, the very nerve of our weakness to-day. Gordon is a great man and he is going to be heard from one of these days. To-night I am going down to hear Parker. Parker is another man to be reckoned with in this mad commercial hurly burly. He has been thundering the truth here on Fifth Avenue

The Simple Gospel a Big Success

for twenty years and in no uncertain words either. And during all that time he has kept his big auditorium full both morning and evening and with no other drawing card than his own presentation of the simple truth. I tell you, Edward, that is a great record when we consider that he has nothing but business blocks all about him to-day. The fact is the only preachers on Manhattan Island who will have a decent audience to-night are the preachers who are sticking to the simple gospel. Now that is a fact, and it ought to be an eye-opener to the rest of us, don't you think? But I will write you of my visit to —— next time. Meanwhile, believe me

Ever faithfully yours,

MILCOLUMBUS.

Letters to Edward

October 30, 1912.

MY DEAR EDWARD :

I have been racking my poor brain all the morning over an Old Testament text. I got out my Hebrew Bible and my Gesenius and tried to wade through the chapter in the original but I tell you it was aggravatingly slow, turtle-like work. Between poor footing (or poor grounding shall I say?) and cross currents, and deep water in spots, I had quite a struggle. One or two channels I had to swim outright and I never was much of a swimmer anyway, and when it comes to Oriental waters I need life-preservers and all sorts of buoyant appliances to keep me afloat. But joking aside I wish I had kept up my Semitic acquaintance. It never was very extensive to be sure, but I suppose I could have made myself passable.

I do so want to get my bearings on the Old Testament and find out just how far its historical accuracy extends. Of course it is a question in the last analysis for scholars but they are so unsatisfactory—they differ so! My

Keeping Up One's Hebrew

ignorance of these great critical questions is appalling and it worries me. I have not allowed my Greek to hide away and fall into such lamentable rust I am glad to say, for I read a chapter every morning and thoroughly enjoy it too, but my Hebrew manœuvering is vanity and vexation of spirit.

The chapter I have been laboring this morning is the old familiar one, the fifty-third of Isaiah. I started to write a sermon on that fourth verse, "Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows." God comes so close to us in sorrow. Do you know I really think we never fully grasp the reality of God until we have either loved or sorrowed. I have just been reading Forbes Robinson's "Letters to his friends." He says, "We cannot get over sorrow but we can get into it," and when we do get into it we find right in the heart of the mystery our best friend—the Man of Sorrows Himself.

I have been thinking a good deal of late of these words of the Apostle, "Counted worthy to suffer." They seem so wonderful and far beyond me. I had often read them without their making much of an impression, but some

Letters to Edward

months ago I came across a little story in Griffith John's life and do you know it lightened up the whole passage surprisingly. The story goes on to tell how, when that great hero was surrounded one day by a hostile mob who were beating him and clamoring for his life, he put up his handkerchief to his face to wipe the perspiration away and when he looked at it it was covered with blood, and then he confesses how all at once a great joy possessed him because something like a revelation came that he had been counted worthy to give these few drops for the cause and the Leader he loved. And would you believe it, since reading that little story the verse hasn't seemed nearly so remote, and I have been even wondering if there is not good reason to doubt our loyalty if we are not willing to suffer too. Is not to follow Him to take up our cross? What is discipleship if it is not cross-bearing? And is not suffering part of that cross? Does not *I believe* imply *I belong*? And if we belong to Him are we not His property to be used and marked as to Him seemeth best?

And then, besides, is it not also true that as

The Marks of the Master

we climb towards perfection we climb towards the possibility of pain? Is not suffering the endowment of a sensitive nature? Who more sensitive than the great Sufferer? Why, the Apostle sometimes amazes me with how insistent he is in proclaiming that in the kingdom of our Lord it is a privilege to suffer. He says, "Now I rejoice in my sufferings." It was like a medal a hero wears. The superlative favor would seem to be ordained to this honor. It is one of the advanced degrees. "From henceforth," he cries out, and there is a touch of triumph in the rising tone, "From henceforth let no man trouble me for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus."

And not only do we please Him by bearing our burdens manfully and bravely and joyously but the lessons we learn in this school are so unspeakably precious and sweet. Samuel Rutherford used to say that whenever he found himself in the cellar of affliction he always looked about him for the wine. Lanier's lines have such a genuine ring to them because I suppose he sang them out of his own sad experience :

Letters to Edward

“The dark hath many dear avails ;
The dark distils divinest dews ;
The dark is rich with nightingales,
With dreams, and with the heavenly muse.”

Benson tells us of a chum of his who started to make a record trip through life. He was unusually gifted. Reaching up one day in his library for a book he slipped and fell. Curvature ensued. He was placed on the shelf with “other cracked jars.” There was resentment and bitterness for a time, until one day the truth dawned that although on the shelf he could serve in a ruined temple. It was a wonderful discovery. And it is. It seems to me there is no discovery like it. Because it enables the soul cast down to say, “Thy will be done.” And it seems to me, to be able to say that from the depths of one’s heart is after all the Christian’s greatest victory. Do you not think so? Tell me how you feel about it.

Ever faithfully yours,

MILCOLUMBUS.

Church Unity

November 14, 1912.

MY DEAR EDWARD :

It has been another rainy day and I have spent most of the time trying to write a sermon on Church unity. So to-night before I read my little chapter and retire, I thought I would sit down and drop you a line although it is now eleven o'clock.

I have been thinking of late about our unfortunate church divisions. A catholic priest came in the other day to see me and talk over some of his troubles. He is a member of the Passionist order, and has been twenty-two years a priest, but he is thinking very seriously of leaving the society, as he calls it. He is dissatisfied and feels that there is something better. So he came to have a preliminary talk with me and ask which branch of the Protestant communion I would advise him to enter. Well, do you know when I thought of the oneness of the body he was leaving, and the divisions and partitions of the faith he was embracing, I was half ashamed. And then when he

Letters to Edward

came straight out and asked me for the difference between the Presbyterian and Dutch Reformed Church, I was really uncomfortable. I must have blushed without for I felt the red tide rising within. Although I was born and reared a Scotch Presbyterian and am now a member in good and regular standing of the Dutch Reformed classis, I have never hesitated to say that there is about as much good reason for the two organizations as there is for two pens in this penholder. It is inexcusable, it is wasteful, it is sinful. "The distinction is invisible to the naked eye."

And it is so nearly everywhere we turn in the whole visible fellowship. First of all are the national lines—Roman, Greek, Anglican, Coptic, Nestorian. Then we have groups named after some great leader—Lutherans, Calvinists, Wesleyans, Arminians, Swedenborgians. Then we have the sects that differ over the ordinances, Mennonites, Friends, Baptists, Plymouth Brethren, et cetera. Dear, dear, what a welter and confusion. Isn't it sad? I am very fond of Baring Gould's hymn "Onward Christian Soldiers," but I always

Church Unity

say, "We will omit the second stanza, please."
For to listen to a great congregation standing
up and joining heartily in the lines,

"We are not divided, all one body we ;
One in faith and doctrine, one in charity,"

always brings one of these same scarlet tinges
to my cheeks.

I began my ministry in a little town in Missouri. Ours was called the Presbyterian Church North ; our brethren right across the street were called Cumberland Presbyterians, and a stone's throw down the same street was a little shack of a meeting-house called the Presbyterian Church South. There were three of us pastors ministering to about three hundred people and our combined salaries was less than five hundred dollars. Of course this was supplemented by the Boards. It impressed me for all time and I have never forgotten the lesson I learned and the harm that a few ecclesiastical politicians can do in a small place.

The other day I was glancing over a new book on Japan. The author was saying that in Tokio there are twenty-one different Protestant

Letters to Edward

missions on one public square. And I thought how confusing to an Oriental it must surely be to find the way of life with twenty-one guides directing him. The barbarity of an island we know can be gauged largely by the multiplicity of its dialects. I am told that in some of the South Sea Islands there is sometimes a different dialect every five miles. And I think too that the crudeness of our Christianity is found not infrequently in the varieties of its expression. I was struck on reading what Wu Ting Fang, our late Chinese ambassador, said recently. In the course of an address he made this remark, "The weak point in the religious life of America is its 'dissevered condition.'" That, mark you, from a Chinaman.

And, Edward, there is not the slightest doubt in my mind about it. What is the trouble with us here in New York, for instance? Why do we stand so helpless before these gigantic wrongs? We might as well be frank and own up. It is largely because we do not meet the enemy with a common front. Like the Russians we are firing half the time on our own fleet. Stonewall Jackson was out reconnoiter-

Church Unity

ing when he was shot by his own men. . . .
Christians who hope to gather around the table
of our Lord above refuse to meet around His
table here below. Isn't it pathetic? . . .
I remember in those good old days long ago
when we used to play football we said in our
team that while brilliant individual playing
was all right yet the game was won by team
work. I wonder how long it is going to take
the Church to learn that lesson. The Balkan
States have learned it with profit. I declare
our cleavages are about as irrelevant to any
real efficiency as the old weapons in the Tower
of London would be to the war in Macedonia.

Why has the Catholic Church such an influence in our land? Or the Christian Science body? Mr. Burton tells us that it is impossible to-day to get a line in any Boston paper that reflects on Mrs. Eddy or her work. Why, we Protestants will never capture the press of this country until they are a little more afraid of us than they are now. All these editorial slurs at religion would never be if we commanded a wholesome fighting respect. But there you are. We do not speak with the slightest au-

Letters to Edward

thority because we do not seem to realize that "In Union is Strength." Then look, too, at the extensions we have lost. Why is it that so many charitable institutions are no longer under our wing? They once were part of us but they have drifted away. I could count dozens of earnest women in our own local parish here who are spending a day a week, and some of them two days, down in some nursery or Y. W. C. A. or settlement work, in organizations that have no connection whatever with any visible branch of the kingdom, and yet these very organizations were started originally by the Church and they are still financed and run by Christian people. Why is it?

Edward, I believe, as I told you once before, that the day is coming, and I am not so sure that it is as far off as we think, when we will have only two denominations in this country—Protestant and Catholic. I will not live to see it nor will you, but I am confident it is coming. And I think we ought to pray and work for its speedy approach. I believe that good brother was right when he said it ought to be the divine ideal of denominations to labor for their

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own extinction. Sometimes I hear ministers plead for inorganic unity but what I want to see myself is organic unity. The inorganic idea is too hazy for me. What I want to see is the unity of mercury when the little drops run together and become one, only a larger one. I notice that in Montreal this fall four theological seminaries are becoming affiliated to McGill, the churches represented being Presbyterian, Congregational, Methodist and Episcopal. That is a step in the right line. We had Canon Henson with us the other day. He told us at our Ministers' Union that if he could have his way he would go about the land blowing up all our denominational seminaries with dynamite. I do not think we need to invite any such militant method as that. It seems to me the Montreal way is much the better and saner.

Sometimes when I begin to talk about Church Unity my friends come to me and enlarge on their traditions. I always feel like saying to them, "What we want is unity and love and peace, not tradition." Christ did not pray for our traditions. He prayed for truth, for sanctification through the truth. He prayed that we

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all might be one. The Church was meant to be a family. The idea of a family is that we are all of the same blood and that we all bear the same name, and that love is the connecting link. Our Blessed Lord founded His Church not to be a form nor a guild nor a ritual but to be "a loving union of men and women bound together in a consuming passion to do the world good."

. . . She was not born in the womb of any tradition. She was born out of the will of God in Christ Jesus, born out of His great creative prayer into which He poured His very life and during which He shed His very blood. "That they all might be one as Thou Father art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in us, that the world may believe that Thou didst send Me."

But I am not discouraged, and I do not know that anything has pleased me more with the work on the Foreign Field than to learn that we are moving there in the right direction. You know we have an Evangelical Union of all the churches in the Philippines. In China, too, there has been splendid progress. While of course you are aware of the fact that in

Scotchmen and Dutchmen

Japan our Reformed and Presbyterian Churches have united in one body under the name "The Church of Christ in Japan." If Scotchmen and Dutchmen can work together harmoniously in the Orient, I don't for the life of me see why they can't do the same thing in the Occident. Think of the money saved. That alone, it seems to me, and it is the very lowest argument one could cite, that alone it would seem ought to be decisive. Some people are so afraid that when Church Unity is consummated the form of worship will be monotonous. But I can see no reason why one great American Church should not be able to give each local organization the fullest freedom of liturgy and service. If a little company can find God more easily through a ritual, why, I would give them all the ritual they want. It is all one land and one faith and one Lord and one fellowship. And for that matter do we not all differ anyway in our own individual connections? Do all Presbyterians think alike? Do all Anglicans think alike? I will venture to say that there are as great differences of belief in any one congregation as in the whole composite

Letters to Edward

body. Men always begin to differ when they begin to think. I see that Dr. van Dyke has just blocked out a simple statement on which all Protestant Christendom might well join hands. Here it is. I like it for its brevity.

1. God, our Father in heaven.

2. Jesus Christ, the Light of the world, our Lord and Saviour from sin and death.

3. The Bible, our divine guide to life and immortality. I think that is all right. Why could we not all work together on this *modus vivendi*?

I was reading recently the life of Charles Kingsley. He tells a story in it of Archbishop Faber. You know Kingsley and Faber were great friends and often visited each other. On one of these visits Kingsley said to the Archbishop, "Faber, I want you to talk to our young people to-night." "Oh," he said, "I cannot; you do not want a Catholic to talk to your young people." "Yes, I do," Kingsley replied. Well, they went into the meeting and Faber talked to a class of young communicants for twenty-three minutes on the different names of the Lord Jesus Christ. And Kingsley, speak-

Archbishop Faber and Kingsley

ing about it afterwards, says, "It was the last time I ever saw Faber," and he adds these words, "He was the greatest lover of the Lord Jesus that I have ever known." Wasn't that beautiful? And of a Catholic!

But I am getting sleepy and perhaps my letter sounds that way. But I am not going to make any corrections or revisions. Good-bye. Sweet sleep,

And believe me

Faithfully yours,

MILCOLUMBUS.

Letters to Edward

November 25, 1912.

MY DEAR EDWARD :

This is blue Monday, and I am feeling a little off. I spent yesterday at Yale, preached in the University chapel in the morning, and addressed the Christian Association in the evening.

My morning effort was a good deal of a fizzle, because I pitched my voice too high at the start. When the Dean led me on to the pulpit of the big auditorium I found myself facing eighteen hundred or two thousand young restless fellows, and the ones in the rear seemed so far away I felt as if it would be necessary to talk louder than usual, and of course with the usual result. What a mistake a speaker makes when he feels he must get above his ordinary natural conversational tone. Shouting may be tolerable for a few minutes, but half an hour of it becomes terribly tiresome—to the audience I mean.

And the worst of it is when one begins high, it is next to impossible to come down to a lower

At Yale University

level. I had not been speaking five minutes when I realized that I had made a false start, but do what I would I could not get down. And so I had to keep it up to the finish.

Well, it's all over now anyway, and I am not going to worry over it. I did the best I could, but I learned a good lesson, and it is this: the next time I am invited to speak in one of these great big halls of doubtful acoustics, I will go a day earlier and practice for a while on the janitor.

And, by the way, this college preaching is pretty thankless work anyway. The boys treated me all right, but then, you see, I kept safely within the enclosure. I knew well how trespassing was forbidden. I was only too well aware of the fact that I was not spellbinding them, but I tell you, Edward, in a college pulpit, brevity covers a multitude of sins.

I asked the Dean as we were putting on our robes how long they would listen to me, and hardly was the question out of my mouth when I realized what a foolish question it was.

He smiled graciously, and said, "Well, twenty-five minutes is better than half an hour."

Letters to Edward

“And is twenty better than twenty-five?”
I ventured, half-tremblingly.

He laughed as he added, “Well, doctor, the sermon has a good deal to do with it.”

Indeed, Edward, in some of the colleges the treatment the poor dominie gets is little short of ungracious. Some of the men, I know, and they are among our strongest men too, have cut out college preaching altogether. They say that very little good comes of it, especially when attendance is compulsory. One of my friends here in New York never goes any more. He declines every invitation. He says that each institution ought to have its own permanent chaplain. He was telling me the other day of a visit he made a few years ago to—well, we will say Dartmouth. (I suppose I had better make it perfectly clear that Dartmouth was not the institution in question, but I will say Dartmouth on your account. I know you are a little sensitive on this score, and anyway Dartmouth will do as well.) He found in the course of his sermon that they were giving him but a very remote and listless attention. Some were reading books, some

College Preaching

were memorizing their notes, some were drawing geometrical figures, some were snoozing, some were doing worse things.

Stopping in the middle of a paragraph, he said quietly, "What's the matter with you Dartmouth fellows anyhow? Why, I have six old Dartmouth men in my church, and spiritually not one of them is worth shucks."

He said the attention improved at once.

And that reminds me of a story they tell of our old friend P——. Brevity, as we know, is not one of his gifts, but irony is. Well, anyway, this particular Sunday morning the old man was more interminable than usual. And the boys began to cough and some commenced to scrape their feet and some to scrape their throats till the noise and the hacking became embarrassingly annoying. Pausing rather abruptly, the old veteran said, "Let us pray," in the course of his prayer making use of these words, "Oh, Lord, be very gracious unto those who seem to be laboring under the weight of impaired health this morning."

I had a long chat with G—— the other day at the University Club. As you know, he

Letters to Edward

spends most of his time going around among the colleges. I suppose there is not a large institution here in the East that he does not visit every winter, presenting chiefly the claims of the ministry. He tells me that in Cornell this past winter he met only one man who is studying for the church. In Harvard there are six. I have forgotten how many he said there were in Yale, but I know the number surprised me with how small it was. I declare, Edward, the contribution of the great University to our pulpits is almost negligible. The longer I live the more I am coming to believe in the smaller college. It would seem to be true that colleges, like cities, grow godless as they grow big.

Ever faithfully yours,

MILCOLUMBUS.

Eliot's Five-Foot Shelf

December 1, 1912.

MY DEAR EDWARD :

I spent all the afternoon in the city library and what a bewildering place it is! Books, books, books, nothing but books! I asked the superintendent, who happens to be a member of our church, how many there are and he said, "About two million." I am never so overpowered with a feeling of the density of my own ignorance as when I visit this wonderful place. It really oppresses me as I tiptoe through the alcoves. I declare when I am told that 150,000 new volumes are published every year, and then when I pause and reflect that the average man has not the time to read more than perhaps one or two a week, I really do not wonder that so many give up in despair.

A class of young men came to me the other day and asked me what books I would advise them to read. They wanted me to make out a list for them. Well, I consulted Eliot's famous shelf and I read what Frederic Harrison had to say and then I glanced over Comte's library of

Letters to Edward

popular instruction, and then Andrew Lang's list and W. T. Stead's and I know not how many more, and when I was through I was about as bewildered as they were.

"Tell us what to read," the young men said, and I found the voices answering about as confusing as the shouts of hackmen at the depots of some of our seaside resorts. Read the books that interest you, one replied. Read the eternal works of genius, said another, whether they interest you or not, and so cultivate a taste for the tried and proven. Aye, but the trouble with this, I could not help thinking, is that there are so many of them that one needs a second process of elimination and maybe a third and a fourth. Form a habit of reading, another cried; do not mind what you read; the reading of better books will come when you have a habit of reading the inferior.

Read books that make you think, a fourth argued. Always be asking yourself the question—Is this book making me think? Is it quickening my mind and stimulating my powers of thought? If not, lay it down. I believe it was Emerson who on one occasion

Mr. Edison On Books

advised the students of Harvard never to read a book till it was at least a year old. While Herbert Spencer and the poet Wordsworth, and Mr. Edison said something like this, "If I were you I would read very little; books are only playthings to keep you from thinking. Just go into the laboratory and experiment, go out into the hills and commune, go into your study and philosophize and create and construct." I see that the only volume in the den of your late friend Joaquin Miller was a Bible. And so it goes.

Now, with such a tangle, is it any wonder that the average young fellow is puzzled? He is lost in a forest of folios and the guides are all recommending their specialties. And he exclaims almost in despair, "To whom shall I go?"

Well, I said to them, "Young men, if I were you I would first of all read a lot of poetry." Poetry we need as a balance wheel if for no other reason—our life is so full of prose. We may not have to study political economy in our every-day life, but we all have to wrestle with household economy and there is not much

Letters to Edward

poetry in that department. Doesn't it sometimes strike you, Edward, the foolish way we were taught history in school? It was mostly battles and generals and figures and dates. Why should a lad be compelled to burden his little brain with useless dates, anyway? What earthly difference does it make now whether the battle of Kilecrankie was 1689 or 1699? Who cares at this late hour whether Henry the Eighth had six wives or sixteen? What does it matter whether the name of one of them was Jane Seymour or Ann Seymour? Yet I well remember a teacher's examination I tried to pass and one of the questions was, "Name the six wives of Henry the Eighth." I remember it particularly because of the fact that I got the names tangled. There is a way to study history that may be made poetic but how few teachers have mastered it! How few teachers inspire! How few bring out the life of the passage. They can interpret its meaning; they cannot communicate its life. They are exegetes. They miss the soul of the poet. In college we read the "Lady of the Lake," but it was mostly a matter of hunting for adjectives and verbs and

Reading Poetry

adverbs. We parsed the great epic to death. I think the first thing to impress upon young people in recommending poetry is to try to get them to read it as a spiritual discipline. There are many who are coming to feel that Mr. Noyes is right when he says that we are on the threshold of a great poetical renaissance. We are swinging back from the scientific extreme. Yesterday I went down to some exercises at the Spence school. Talcott Williams gave the address and I was especially interested in a story he told which I had never heard before. It was the story of a visit that Mary Garden once paid to Longfellow. She went to the poet when quite a young girl starting out in her career, and she said to him that her hours were so largely taken up with rehearsals, etc., etc., that she had little or no time left for reading, and asking him what advice he would give her to help her attain some little degree of culture. And I was interested in the answer the good man gave her, viz., to spend fifteen minutes each day reading some great poem.

Then for myself I must say I like the essay.

Letters to Edward

It is for me, after poetry, the most rewarding. There is no prose so stimulating as the essay, none so suggestive. It is the torch that lights the fire. I never tire of Addison and Steele and Bacon and Burke. Then I love Montaigne. Every thoughtful student, it seems to me, should pay a visit regularly to the Frenchman and drink deeply of this crystal fountain. One particularly convenient fact about the essay is that we can begin almost anywhere. You can open your Lamb or your Hazlitt at page fifty or page one hundred and fifty and not miss connection. This is not possible as a rule with the story or the poem or the history ; and in these days of pressure and crowding calls, when the spare moment is so precious, it is certainly a most valuable asset. "Go in anywhere," the general said to one of his privates ; "there is good fighting all along the line." And so it is with the essay ; the browsing is good anywhere.

Then I told the class that I considered the most important all round book for young men to be the biography. Some one says that we all of us, young and old, ought to make a

The Essay and the Biography

practice of reading one good biography a year. And I fully believe it, only I would venture to amend the statement by saying one a month. Dozens of young men and women could be counted and cited who could date the turning point in their lives to the reading of some famous biography. If a young man is preparing to enter the legal profession, where can he get more real inspiration than by reading the life of Blackstone or John Marshall? If his leanings are towards medicine, what can surpass Sir James Simpson or Abercrombie? Or if he is looking towards a parliamentary career, what a stimulus would be the life of Gladstone or John Bright! Or if he is ministerially inclined, what a tonic is the life of Phillips Brooks or Parker or MacLaren! Then that noble array of Christian missionaries! Where in the whole field of fiction is there a story as exciting as the life of James Chalmers of New Guinea? What novelist has ever painted a career like the life of James Gilmour of Mongolia? What writer of romance living or dead in any language has ever done anything as thrilling as the career of David Living-

Letters to Edward

stone? And so I told the boys to read weekly a chapter of the life of some true soldier of the Cross. Let it be part, I urged, of the Sabbath program. It will put iron, I said, into your blood and wine into your step and virtue into your hearts. What, after all, is the Bible but a series of great faithful biographies? "Oh, how I love Thy law; it is my meditation all the day." But won't you please send me a list, Edward, and help me out? The young fellows are mostly business young men, in fact, mostly clerks. I shall be greatly and heartily obliged.

Ever faithfully yours,

MILCOLUMBUS.

Bad News

December 28, 1912.

MY DEAR EDWARD :

Your letter has worried me greatly and I am certainly cast down and blue. The day to begin with is cheerless and gloomy. A thick heavy cloud overlaps the city, and I have been all the morning sitting by the grate and trying to keep the chill away. As I look out of my window into the park I notice that the leaves are mostly fallen, and those that are left are in different stages of decay. There is a row of elms along the avenue and they are quite wintry-like ; the butternut also is bare and the linden. I can see a few dry crumpled leaves still clinging to the maple, but the forsythia is comparatively fresh and the weeping willow seems loth to give up its glory. The grass for the most part is a sort of grayish green. The sky is not uniformly overcast but is covered with patches, some darker, some lighter, and there is a raw dampness in the air.

Then when your letter came it completed the

Letters to Edward

forlornness. I have felt during the past few months that our separation has brought us closer together. I only wish now that these dividing mountains and prairies might be removed and cast into the sea. I would give anything if I could only fly and be with you to-night. "Oh, that I had wings like a dove!" Somehow or other I have had an inkling of late that you were not so well. I do not know what gave it to me; I suppose because you have not been writing as often nor as fully about yourself, but then again I would put it all aside as being due to the other happiness that has come into your life. And now it seems my fears were true. Tell me, have you had more than one hemorrhage, and how severe was it? You are so reticent about yourself and it keeps me so in suspense. You know hemorrhages are oftentimes beneficial; they not infrequently carry the trouble away. I have known of many cases who were helped by them. So you must not allow yourself to get dejected, because it may be a blessing. Do you think if I were to go west next month you could arrange to get off and come with me out

Bad News

onto the desert? I feel sure I could manage it, and I am just as positive as it is possible to be that it would do you good. We could hire a couple of ponies and spend the whole month on horseback. Then we will take a first-rate cook along with us and a camping outfit, and live quite luxuriously in the open. The whole idea can be carried out for \$1,000.00. I know where to go and how to make all arrangements. I have a friend in Flagstaff—a practicing physician there—who would attend to everything for us and all that you would need to do would be to meet us there. Now, my dear boy, I mentioned this to you once before, but now I want to go myself. The more I think of it the more it grows on me. If you feel strong enough to get away, just wire me immediately on receipt of this and I will not waste a moment. Meantime I will be looking round for a tentative supply. Now, Edward, if you do this you can be well. I am confident of it. Something tells me so. I have seen it work. It is the only thing for your trouble, and you are young and hopeful and everything is in your favor. So please do not say no, but brace

Letters to Edward

up, cheer up, and come. We can have a great time.

Oh, Edward, how young and light and bright and buoyant it would make me to meet you out there. I have been reading the biography of Mark Rutherford. He tells us in one place of his lifelong desire and hope for a friend to whom he could pour out his deepest and his saddest thoughts. With wistful eyes he searched for years for some one who could understand him, and to whom he could unlock and unburden his soul. But the friend never appeared and Rutherford became moody and sullen and glum. Well, my dear boy, I have always felt that I could unfold to you my inmost feelings. I never have been able to tell you just how much I have missed you. Our separation has been a cross to me! It has been a real poignant pain. And now that you are so far away, and maybe need me, is an inexpressible hardship. How strange and past finding out are the ways of Providence! You are so young and gifted! But it's all for training, no doubt; that is what we are here for, is it not? So let us play the man.

Maltbie Babcock

We are not here to whimper, whine, to weep, to
While away the hours ;
Complaint's for cowards ;
Courage delights to dream, to dare, to do, to
Demonstrate its powers.

As Babcock says, "Plough ahead as a steamer does, rough or smooth, fine or shine. To carry your cargo and make port is the point." And in another place he adds, "Perhaps the richest of God's earthly gifts is an accepted sorrow. So do not lose this one. Say 'Speak, Lord, Thy servant heareth' and He will tell you some things worth all it costs to hear them. I cannot say what they will be, but by and by you will know, and then you will be more consecrated to the good you can do."

What a wonderful victory one gains when he comes to know that the Master has him by the hand and is leading him. The night is dark but he can feel that gentle pressure and he can hear that soft sweet whisper, "Follow Me." Then we know that we are safe, that no harm can happen to us, that we cannot possibly go astray since He knows every turn of the road, and anyway the morning is not far distant. "The path of the just is as the dawning light

Letters to Edward

that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." I sometimes think as the night wears away, and the first streaks of dawn begin to appear, how glorious will be that first glimpse of our Leader whom having not seen we love. And now I am going to pray for you, my true, brave friend, that you may receive a wonderful blessing and that we both may be wisely and divinely guided. I commit you to the great and kindly heart of our loving Father. He will do what is best. He will fill us with His own rich and tranquil peace. So let us both lean on the arm that is unfailing. Wire me at once, and with my heart's deepest love, believe me

Ever affectionately yours,

MILCOLUMBUS.

“For All the Saints——”

December 30, 1912.

MY DEAR MISS ——

I drop you this line to tell you how sorely crushed I am. I know a little how you feel because I am so broken-hearted myself. When the Western Union boy came to my door yesterday I was just putting on my overcoat to go over to the seminary and give a noon-hour talk to the boys there, but I suspicioned at once what the message meant—and alas, alas, my fears were true! It is only the day before yesterday that I wrote him a letter trying to persuade him to come out with me for a month's holiday on the desert, and now the dear boy is off to a sunnier clime. I cannot realize it. I am simply stunned. Poor Edward, he was the noblest, sweetest, purest, most unselfish spirit I have ever known. I wish I were a little nearer to you to tell you how much I loved him, and to try and comfort you in your keen and searching sorrow. He had been so happy since the engagement and his hopes so bright. He loved you as only a pure and stainless soul can

Letters to Edward

love—with a devotion that was well-nigh worship. Not one of his letters but has some bright saying of yours, or some quick repartee, or some witticism, or some tender and appreciative and ardent line. How warm his nature was, how sympathetic, how thoughtful, how whole-hearted! Ah, me, how he could love! And is not that one of the signs of bigness? Little people are not capable of a great affection. I can hardly wait to hear the story of his last illness. You know, do what I would, I could not get him to tell me about himself. He would write a long letter and talk about almost everything under the sun, but about the very thing I was most anxious about—scarcely a line. And so I am in the dark. Would it be asking too much, dear Miss——, if I were to express the wish that you write and tell me all? I am longing so to hear, and nobody, it seems, can relate the very things I would like most to know but yourself. I wish I could make my pen tell my inmost thoughts. I wish I could make it convey to you what a rare and unusual man Edward was. He was one in a million. We have known each other intimately the last

“For All the Saints

twelve years. He was quite a few landmarks my junior, but the difference in our ages did not hinder our being the closest confidants. I think we have never had a dispute or a contention in all these months of intimacy, no, not even a misunderstanding. There was never the slightest ripple on our friendship. He had the delightful way of putting the best construction on an act and looking around for pleasant things, and always trying to speak a nice word ; that was his nature.

And then he was so gifted ! His was the brightest (I will not say the deepest), but I will say the brightest young mind I have ever met. Of course you know he was the first man in his college class at ———, but indeed I presume on second thought that you do not know this fact, for he was too modest ever to tell you. You might have lived with him a hundred years and never have found it out. His modesty was almost morbid. I used to tell him it was a sin, that he did not have a right appraisal of his own powers at all. He was so bashful that it was positively painful to himself, and oftentimes laughable to us. I have watched

Letters to Edward

him walk on to the pulpit platform with his knees shaking, and I have seen him sit in the pulpit chair and try at the last moment to write a notice he had overlooked, but his hand was so nervous that when the time came for the announcements he could not read his own handwriting. I really used to feel sorry for him till he got well under way. I have recently been reading the life of Henry Drummond by George Adam Smith, and all the while I could not help feeling how alike he was to the Scotch professor. He was a man of the Drummond type, nurtured, it would seem, on the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians. Culture was stamped on every clause of his nature. His earnestness was so contagious, his spirit so winsome. His ideal was "the true, the beautiful and the good," and it flashed and shone in every glance of those large beautiful blue eyes of his. I think, in a word, that the whole secret of Edward's charm was that he was a graduate from the school of the Master. There was nothing harsh or severe in his make-up. He was filled to overflowing with pity, with tenderness, with forgiveness, with meekness,

“For All the Saints——”

with mercy, with kindness, with consideration for others. And yet with it all there was a mingling of the heroic. He was courageous, intrepid, fearless, indomitable. In pain and disappointment and set-back and throw-down he never flinched. Truly he made a gallant fight but the wind was too raw, the flower too frail, and it fell early in the morning. But not to defeat did it fall, to victory rather, to fullness, to completeness, to even greater beauty, to growth, to maturity, to glory. Down here the fragrance and sweetness will linger for a long time, but yonder could we but walk for a little with the Master through His garden, how wondrous fair would be the sight! How glad would be our astonished eyes! How our hearts would rejoice!

And so, my dear Miss ——, I am writing you out of a heart bursting with grief because I know how your own poor desolate soul is aching. And remember too that there are hundreds and thousands weeping with you, for he was everybody's friend. I must drop a line at once to his dear old mother. How she will need our prayers! Edward was the idol of her

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heart. But what a wonderful gift she gave to the world! How happy she must be even in this hour of her unspeakable agony and loneliness! To train up and give to the Church such a man, what with it can compare? But she is a remarkable woman, as rare in her way as her son was in his. You have never seen her but some day you will, and when you do you will understand a whole lot of Edward's power and grace. And now, my dear friend, I must close. I will write you again in the course of a few days. Remember I am thinking of you always, and if ever there is anything I can do for you, you know how happy it would make me to be told of it. Be brave in this your hour of pain. Remember if we suffer with Him we shall also reign with Him. "Wait quietly for the salvation of our God." Try hard to say "Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in Thy sight," and always think of me, will you not, as a real friend. For Edward's sake,

Ever faithfully yours,

MILCOLUMBUS.

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